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MEMOIRS

OF

MARMONTEL.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Including

ANECDOTES OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED LITERARY AND POLITICAL CHARACTERS WHO APPEARED IN FRANCE DURING THE LAST CENTURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH;

with

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

By the

AUTHOR OF THE SWISS EMIGRANTS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

Vol. III.

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MEMOIRS

OF

MARMONTEL.

BOOK VIII.

AS soon as Diderot and I were alone, and at such a distance from the company as not to be heard, he began his narrative in these words—"Were it not that you know a part of what I have to say, I would keep silence with you, as I have done with the public, respecting the origin and motive of the injury done me by a man, whom I loved, and whom I still lament, for I believe him to be most unhappy. It is cruel for me to be calumniated in an atrocious manner, under the treacherous mask of friendship, and

to be betrayed, without being able to defend myself; but such is my situation. You will soon see that my reputation is not alone interested. Since, therefore, I cannot defend my honour, but at the expence of another's, it is my duty to be silent, and I am silent. Rousseau abused me without mentioning the true reason; but it was impossible for me to answer him without alluding to it: I must have divulged what he has passed over in silence; and he was very sure that I would do no such thing. He was perfectly certain that I would allow him to reap the fruits of his injurious conduct, rather than disclose to the public a secret which is not my own; here therefore Rousseau is an unfair aggressor; he strikes a disarmed man.

"You know the unhappy passion which Rousseau conceived for Madame ***. He was one day so rash as to declare it in a manner which could not fail to wound her. Shortly after, Rousseau called upon me at Paris. 'I am a madman,

I am undone,' said he; 'listen to what has happened.' And he gave me an account of his adventure.—'Well,' said I, 'where is the misfortune?'—'Do not you see that she will presently write to *** that I have attempted to seduce her, to carry her off from him? and can you doubt that he will accuse me of insolence and treachery? I have thus made him my mortal enemy for life.'—'Not at all,' said I, coolly; '*** is a reasonable man; he knows you, he is well aware that you are neither a Cyrus nor a Scipio. After all, where is the great offence? a moment of error, of delirium! You must write him yourself without delay, and make a full acknowledgment; and while you urge in excuse an intoxication with which he cannot be unacquainted, you must beg him to forgive you this moment of disorder. Be assured, the only effect will be to make him love you the more.'

"Rousseau was transported, and took me in his arms. 'You restore me to life,' said he; 'the advice you give me

reconciles me with myself; I will write this very evening.' From that time he appeared more tranquil; and I made no doubt of his having done what we had agreed upon.

"But some time after, *** arrived, and came to call upon me. He did not explain himself, but shewed such deep indignation against Rousseau, that I at first thought Rousseau had not written to him. 'Have you not received a letter from him?' said I.—'Yes,' said he; 'a letter which would deserve the severest chastisement.'

"Sir,' said I, 'how can you feel so much resentment on account of a moment of folly, which he acknowledges, and intreats you to forgive? If this letter offends you, it is I whom you must accuse; for it was by my advice that he wrote it. —'And do you know,' said he, 'what this letter contains?'—'I know that it contains a confession, excuses, and a petition for forgiveness.'—'It contains no such thing. It is a compound of treach-

ery and insolence; it is a masterpiece of art, with the view of throwing upon Madame *** the blame, from which he wishes to free himself.'—'You amaze me,' said I; 'this was not at all what he promised.'—In order to appease him, I then gave a plain account of the grief and repentance which Rousseau seemed to feel at having offended him, and the resolution he had formed of asking forgiveness; by that means, I easily brought *** to regard him with pity.

"To this explanation, Rousseau gave the name of treachery. As soon as he learned that I had made an acknowledgment in his name, which he had not made himself, he vomited fire and flames, accusing me of having betrayed him. On learning this, I went to him. 'For what purpose are you come?' said he.—'I am come,' said I, 'to know whether you are a wicked man or a fool.'—'Neither the one nor the other,' said he; 'but my heart is wounded, inflamed against you. I will never see you again.'—'What

have I done?' said I.—'You have dived,' said he, 'into the recesses of my soul; you have extracted my secret, and have divulged it. You have exposed me to the contempt, to the hatred of a man who will never forgive me.' I allowed his rage to evaporate; and after he was weary of loading me with reproaches, I said, 'We are alone; and between us two, your eloquence is vain. Your judges here are reason, truth, my conscience, and your own. Will you examine them?' He made no answer, but threw himself into his elbow chair, covered his eyes with his hands, and I began to speak.

"On the day,' said I, 'on which we agreed that you should be ingenuous in your letter to ***, you were, according to your own account, reconciled to yourself; what then made you change your resolution? You answer not; I will answer for you. When you were under the necessity of taking up your pen, and making the humble acknowledgment of

an unhappy error, (although the confession would have done you honour), your devilish pride got up. Yes, your pride; you accused me of treachery, and I have endured it; you must now allow me to accuse you of pride, for otherwise your conduct would only be meanness. Pride then whispered that it was unworthy of your character to write to any man in an humble tone, and to ask forgiveness of a happy rival: that it was not you who ought to be accused, but she, whose seduction, whose alluring coquetry, whose flattering sweetness, had won your heart. Then artfully embellishing this fine excuse, you did not perceive, that by imputing the arts of a coquet, to a woman of delicacy and feeling, and holding up the picture to a man who esteems and loves her, you were wounding two hearts at once.'—'Well,' exclaimed he, 'suppose I have been unjust, imprudent, senseless, how does this justify you for having betrayed my confidence, and revealed the secret of my soul?'—'It

follows from this,' said I, 'that the deceit is all on your side; that your conduct alone induced me to defend you as I have done. Why did you not tell me that you had changed your opinion? I would not have spoken of your repentance; I would not have supposed myself repeating the very words of your letter. You concealed from me your having done what you knew I would not have approved; and when this conduct of yours produced its natural effect, you treat it as a crime. Go, your heart is capable only of hatred, since, in the most sincere and tender friendship, you seek for occasions of indulging it.'

"Courage! barbarian,' said he; 'you will soon overwhelm completely a weak and miserable man. I had no consolation remaining on earth but my own esteem, and you have torn it from me.' Never in his life was Rousseau so eloquent, and so interesting, as then in his affliction. Deeply affected by the state in which I saw him, my eyes were filled with

tears; when he saw me weep, he was himself affected, and took me in his arms.

"Now then we were reconciled, and he continued to read to me his New Eloise, which he had completed; while I went on foot twice or thrice a week from Paris to his hermitage in order to hear it read, and to answer as a friend to the confidence of my friend. Our rendezvous was in the wood of Montmorency; I arrived in a violent perspiration, and he always complained when I made him wait. Now just at this time appeared the letter on public amusements, with that fine passage from Solomon, in which he accuses me of having injured and betrayed him."

'What!' cried I, 'in the midst of perfect harmony; after a full reconciliation! it is incredible.'—'It is indeed, and yet it is true. Rousseau had determined to break with me, and with my friends; he had missed the most favourable opportunity. What indeed could be more convenient than to advance accusa-

tions, from which I could not justify myself. Vexed at having lost this advantage, he resumed it, persuading himself that my apparent reconciliation had been only affected, and that I had imposed upon him.' 'What a man!' exclaimed I again; 'and yet he believes his own heart to be good.' Diderot replied, 'it should be so, for he has naturally much feeling, and he loves men very well, so long as they appear only in the distance. He hates only those who come near him, because his pride makes him believe that they all envy him; that they serve only to humble, that they flatter only to injure him; and that even those who pretend to love him, are accomplices in this conspiracy. This is his malady. He is rendered interesting by misfortunes, by talents, by the goodness and uprightness which is at the bottom of his soul, and he would have friends if he believed in them. He will never have any, or they will love him without any return; for he will always view them with distrust.'

This fatal mistrust, which led him so rashly and so hastily, not only to suspect, but to believe his friends guilty of whatever is most atrocious, most mean, and most infamous; which made him accuse them of meanness and perfidy, with no other proof than the reveries of an ardent and gloomy imagination, whose vapours troubled his wretched head, and whose malignant influence soured and poisoned his gentlest affections: in short, this delirium of a suspicious and timid mind, rendered ferocious by misfortune, was indeed the malady of Rousseau, and the torment of his soul.

Instances of this were every day seen in the injurious manner in which he broke off all intercourse with the persons who were most devoted to him; accusing them sometimes of laying snares for him, sometimes of coming to his house only as spies, to betray and sell him to his enemies. I know particulars on this subject which are perfectly incredible. But the most astonishing of all, was the monstrous in-

gratitude with which he repaid the tender and active friendship of the virtuous David Hume, and the deep malignity with which insult was added to injury in the calumnies which he raised against him. You will find in the very collection of the works of Rousseau this monument of his shame. You will there see the artful manner in which he prepared his calumny; you will see the absurd proofs by which he thought himself able to convict his most sincere friend, the most honourable and best of men, of deceit, of duplicity, of the blackest treachery; you will read, not without indignation, in the relation which he gives of his own conduct towards his benefactor, the following stroke of raillery, which is the sublime of insolence:

First blow on the cheek of my patron.
Second blow on the cheek of my patron.
Third blow on the cheek of my patron.

I believe the general opinion completely fixed upon the subject of these two

men; but if any thing more were wanting to confirm the idea which is entertained of the character of David Hume, the following are facts to which I have been witness:

'On the recommendation of my Lord-mareschal, and of the Countess de Boufflers, Hume offered to procure Rousseau a free and peaceful retreat in England. Rousseau having accepted this generous offer, they were on the point of setting out, when Hume, who was acquainted with the Baron d'Holbach, told him that he was taking Rousseau into his own country. 'Sir,' said the baron, 'you are cherishing a serpent in your bosom; I give you warning, you will feel its bite.'

The baron himself had invited Rousseau to his house, and had paid a great deal of attention to him; his house was the rendezvous of those who were then called philosophers; and in the full security with which honourable minds are inspired by the inviolable sacredness of the

hospitable roof under which they meet, D'Holbach and his friends had admitted Rousseau to their most intimate acquaintance. Now, you may see in his Emile the manner in which he stigmatized them. Assuredly, although the brand of atheism which he fixed upon their society, had been just, it would have been an odious breach of trust. But with respect to the greater number, he well knew it to be a mere calumny; he knew that the theism of his vicar had zealous proselytes among them. The baron therefore had come to know him at his own expence. But honest David Hume thought he saw more passion than truth in the warning which the baron gave him. He made no hesitation therefore in carrying Rousseau along with him to his native country, and in rendering him all the good offices of friendship. He believed, and it was natural he should, that he had made happy the most feeling and best of men; he expressed his pleasure in all the letters he wrote to the Baron d'Holbach, and was constantly en-

deavouring to remove the bad opinion which the baron entertained of Rousseau. He extolled the goodness of heart, the candour, the ingenuousness of his friend. 'I am vexed to think,' said he, 'that you should be unjust towards him. Believe me, Rousseau is far from being a bad man. The more I see him, the more I esteem and love him.' By every post, the letters from Hume to the baron repeated the same praises; and the latter, after reading them, always said, 'He does not know him yet; wait a little, and he will know him.' Accordingly, not long after, he receives a letter from Hume, beginning thus, 'You are quite in the right, my lord; Rousseau is a monster.'—'Aye,' said the baron coolly, and without any surprize, 'he knows him now.'

How had so sudden a change happened in the opinion of the one, and in the conduct of the other. You will see it in the statement of facts published by the two parties. Here I think it my duty to declare and attest, that, at the very time

when Rousseau was accusing Hume of betraying and dishonouring him at London, the same Hume, full of candour, and of zealous friendship for him, was attempting to erase the fatal impressions which he had left at Paris, and to restore him to the good opinion of those who viewed him with the utmost aversion and contempt.

What ravage had this excessive pride made in a soul naturally mild and tender! Considering the information and talents which he possessed, how weak, how wretchedly little, was this vanity, so restless, so gloomily suspicious, and at the same time, so angry and vindictive, which was irritated with the very thought of an attempt being made to wound it, which supposed such an attempt even without the slightest ground, and never forgave it. An important lesson for those whose minds have any propensity to this vice! without it, no one would have been more beloved or respected than Rousseau; but it poisoned his life, it rendered benefits

odious, benefactors insupportable, and gratitude burdensome to him; it made him repel friendship with insult; it made him live unhappy, and die almost abandoned. Let me pass to more pleasing objects, with which I have a nearer concern.

Neither the agreeable life which I spent at Paris, nor that still more agreeable which I spent in the country, deprived my dear Odde and my sister of the delightful fortnight which was annually reserved for them. I passed it with them at Saumur; and there indeed it was that all the sensibility of my soul was called forth to enjoyment. By this couple, who loved each other more than light and life, I saw myself loved and revered as the source of their happiness. I could not satiate myself with the inexpressible pleasure of contemplating my own work, in the happiness of two pure souls, whose every vow invoked upon my head the blessings of heaven. Their tenderness penetrated, their piety trans-

ported my soul. Their behaviour exhibited genuine virtue in all its simplicity. To this continual enjoyment, was added that of seeing them beloved and honoured in their city. Madame Odde was quoted as the model of her sex: the name of M. Odde was synonymous with justice and truth. If any dispute arose between the branch of the court of excise established at Saumur, and the company of farmers general, Odde was referred to as their umpire. I was witness to this confidence, acquired by a man who was another self. I was witness to the love of the people for a man who exercised a severe employment, without a single complaint being ever heard against him; so skilful was his humanity in softening its rigour. I myself shared in the respect with which they were regarded. Their friends did not know how best to entertain me; and all the days which we spent together were days of rejoicing. You would not have been born, my children, had my worthy sister lived: I would have gone and spent

my old age with her; but she carried in her bosom the seeds of that malady which has been fatal to all my family; and this hope, which I had indulged, was soon cruelly torn from me.

In one of these happy visits, which I paid at Saumur, I was led by the vicinity of Ormes, to pay a visit to the Count d'Argenson, formerly minister at war, whom the king had sent thither into exile. I had not forgotten the kindness he expressed for me during the period of his glory. When I was very young, I had written a little poem upon the establishment of the military school, the principal honour of which belonged to him, and he had taken pleasure in recommending this proof of my zeal. He had presented me, at his table, to the nobility who served in the army, as a young man who had a right to their gratitude and protection. He received me in his exile with extreme sensibility. Oh! my children, what an incurable malady is that of ambition! How dismal is the life of a

disgraced minister! Already worn out by labour, chagrin completed the ruin of his health. His body was torn with the gout; his soul was still more cruelly torn with recollection and regret; and amid the agreeable reception, which he was so kind as give me, I could not but see that he was a victim to grief of every kind.

Taking a walk with him in his gardens, I perceived at a distance a marble statue; I asked whom it represented. 'It is one,' said he, 'at which I have no longer courage to look:' and as we turned away, 'Ah! Marmontel,' said he, 'if you knew the zeal with which I have served him, if you knew how often he assured me that we should spend our life together, and that I had not a better friend in the world than he. Such are the promises of kings; such is their friendship:' and as he said these words, his eyes were filled with tears.

In the evening, during the time of supper, we remained alone in the drawing-room. This drawing-room was hung

with pictures representing the battles at which he had been present along with the king. He shewed me the place in which they had been stationed during the action; he repeated what the king had said, he had not forgotten a single word. 'Here,' said he, talking of one of these battles, 'I believed for two hours that my son was dead. The king was so kind as to appear affected by my grief. How changed is he now? nothing of mine affects him any longer.' These ideas haunted him; and when he was left a moment to himself, he sunk, as it were, into an abyss of grief. Then his daughter-in-law, Madame de Voyer, went immediately and sat down by him, pressed him in her arms, and caressed him; while he, like a child, dropping his head upon the bosom, or upon the knees of his comforter, bathed them in tears, which he made no attempt to conceal.

The poor man who, on account of his gout, lived only on boiled fish, was by that means too deprived of the only plea-

sure of the senses which could have been agreeable to him; for he was an epicure. But the most austere regimen did not procure even an alleviation of his sufferings. On leaving him, I could not forbear expressing how deeply I sympathized in his affliction. 'You give me an additional regret,' said he, 'at not having done something for you which I could once have done so easily.' Shortly after, he obtained permission to remove to Paris. I saw him arrive there at the point of death, and received his last sighs.

On some future occasion, my children, I will give you very curious details relative to the cause of his disgrace, and that of his antagonist M. de Machault, which happened on the same day. A motive of delicacy prevents me from inserting these particulars in memoirs, which might accidentally escape out of your possession. But instead of this serious anecdote, I shall give you a very diverting one; for my

narrative must now and then be a little enlivened.

My friend Vaudesir had a small estate near Angers, from which his unhappy son, Saint-James, took his name. As he knew that I went every year to visit my sister at Saumur, by the way of Angers, he once offered to take me thither in his post-chaise, on condition that three days of my journey should be spent at Saint-James, whither he was going. I willingly agreed to this engagement, and I met at Saint-James the flower of the wits from the Angerine academy; among others, an abbé, who bore much resemblance to the Abbé Beau-Genie of the Mercure-Galant. He had just signalized himself by so singular a piece of folly, that I could not believe it. 'Will you believe it,' said Vaudesir, 'if he tells it himself? Only assist me in getting him to do it, and you shall see.' Towards the end of dinner, I brought the abbé on the field by talking of his academy; and Vaudesir, taking up the conversation, gave it a magnificent

character. 'Next to the French academy,' said he, 'we have not such an illustrious and well constituted body. The son of M. de Contades has just been received into it. The abbé spoke in the name of the academy, and with the greatest success.'—'The abbé would doubtless add the panegyric of the father to that of the son.'—'Certainly,' said the abbé; 'I took care not to omit that; and I paid a just tribute of praise to the marshal.'—'The field,' said I, 'was rich and vast; yet there was one step not easily got over.'—'Aye,' said he, smiling, 'the affair of Minden; that certainly was the critical point. But I extricated myself very happily. In the first place, I spoke of the actions which had deservedly raised the Marshal de Contades to the command of armies; I enumerated all the glorious actions he had previously performed; and when I came to the battle of Minden, I said only two words: 'Contades appears, Contades is conquered;' and then I went on with another subject.

Being like to burst for want of vent to my laughter, I endeavoured to change the conversation. 'These words,' said I, 'remind me of those of Cæsar, after defeating the son of Mithridates, "I came, I saw, I conquered."—'True,' said the abbé, 'my phrase has even been thought somewhat more laconic.' The grave and emphatic manner in which he pronounced his folly, was so diverting, that Vaudesir and I found great difficulty in keeping our gravity, and dared not look at each other, lest we should burst into laughter.

Madame Geoffrin was not pleased with these journies, and my consequent absence. During the whole summer, I did not attend the academy. She heard complaints made; she thought I incurred censure by yielding my fees to the attentive academicians, (which, with regard to the D'Olivets, was certainly a very ill-founded apprehension); and I frequently received warm reprimands upon what she termed the inconsistency of my conduct.

Really,' said she, 'what can be more ridiculous than first to be so anxious to belong to the academy, and, after your admission, not to attend.' My excuse was the example of the greater number, who attended still worse than I. But she urged, with reason, that I was one of those whose academical functions required constant attendance. She had also a little private interest of her own in these remonstrances; for she spent the summer at Paris, and during this time she did not wish her literary society to be dispersed. I listened to her advice with a respectful modesty, and next day I set out as if nothing had been said. It was natural enough that her kindness to me should be cooled by this behaviour; but a dinner, at which I made myself agreeable, reconciled us; and on serious occasions she resumed her affection for me. I experienced this in two illnesses, which seized me at her house. One was the same fever which has attacked me five times in my life, and which will carry me off at last: it came

on at the time that my Art of Poetry was printing. I wished to add a few articles more, and in consequence of my head being full of this employment, the delirium which attended my feverish paroxysms became more oppressive. My friends were uneasy about my situation; Madame Geoffrin was anxious. Geriglan, a little physician, whom she kept for her servants, cured me very well.

My other illness was a singular kind of rheum: it was a viscous humour, which obstructed the organ of respiration, and which, notwithstanding all the effort of a violent cough, I was unable to expectorate. You may suppose that, after having seen my whole family die of breast complaints, I had some reason to think that my turn was now come. I actually believed so; and being deprived of sleep, growing thinner every day, in short, feeling myself waste away, I no longer doubted that the last stage of the disease would be soon announced by the usual symptom. I formed my resolution accordingly, and

thought only of finding a subject for some work to occupy my thoughts; which, after employing my last moments, might leave behind me some traces of myself.

I had been presented with a print of Belisarius, from the picture of Van-Dyck; it often attracted my eyes, and I wondered that the poets had made no use of so moral, so interesting a subject. I conceived a desire to treat it myself in prose; and as soon as this idea had struck my mind, my illness was suspended as by a sudden charm. Oh! wonderful power of imagination! The pleasure of inventing my story, of arranging and unfolding it, the interest which was excited in me by the first glimpse of the situations and of the scenes which I had imagined, captivated my attention, and withdrew it from myself, so as to render credible all that I had heard of ecstatic transports. My breast was oppressed, I breathed with difficulty; I had fits of convulsive cough; yet I scarcely observed them. My friends called upon me, and spoke of my illness;

I answered like a man who had something else in his head: I was thinking of Belisarius. The want of sleep, which had hitherto been so uneasy to me, was no longer attended with the same wearisome restlessness. My nights, like my days, were spent in meditating upon the adventures of my hero. I was not the less exhausted; and this continual study would have completed the loss of my strength, had not a remedy been found out for my illness. I was acquainted with a Florentine physician, of the name of Gatti, celebrated as the promoter of inoculation, skilful in his art, and a very agreeable man; he it was who came and saved me. 'The object,' said he, 'is to dissolve that thick and glutinous humour which encumbers your lungs, and the remedy is agreeable; you must drink oxymel.' All I did then was to boil together excellent honey and vinegar; and I was very soon cured by the salutary use of the syrup formed from this mixture. It was now more than three months since I thought

myself dying; but, during these three months, I had made some progress in my work. The only chapters that remained to compose were those which required research. All the labour of the imagination was finished, and that was the most interesting.

This work bears a graver character than my other writings, because, in composing it, I believed myself uttering my last words, *novissima verba*, according to the expression of the ancients. The first trial I made of it was upon the soul of Diderot; the second upon that of the hereditary prince, now duke of Brunswick. Diderot was very well pleased with the moral part; but he thought the political part too concise, and prevailed upon me to extend it. The prince of Brunswick, who was travelling in France, after having made war against us with chivalric loyalty, and heroic valour, was enjoying at Paris that high esteem to which his virtues entitled him: an homage more flattering than those customary respects

which are paid to persons of his birth and rank. He expressed a desire to be present at a private meeting of the French academy, an honour which till then had been bestowed only on crowned heads. At this meeting I read a large extract from Belisarius; and had the pleasure of seeing, at the images which I had presented, the countenance of the young hero take fire, and his eyes fill with tears.

He took particular pleasure in the society of literary men, and you will soon see how much he valued it. Helvetius asked him to dine with us, and he owned that never in his life had he enjoyed a dinner so much. It was not likely that I should have been particularly noticed, yet so it happened. Helvetius having told the prince that he thought him like the pretender, and the prince having answered that this remark had actually been made by a number of persons, I said, in a half whisper, 'A few additional features of resemblance would have made Prince

Edward king of England.' These words were heard; the prince felt them, and I saw a modest blush in his countenance.

Though the reading of Belisarius had succeeded so well at the academy, I was sure that it would have very bad success with the Sorbonne. But this was not what gave me anxiety; and provided the court and the parliament should take no part in the quarrel, I was very well pleased to have a skirmish with the theological faculty. I took every precaution, therefore, that I might have it only to fear.

The Abbé Terray was not yet in the ministry; but he was a member of the parliament, and possessed the greatest interest with that body. I went with Madame Gaulard, his friend, to spend some time at his country seat of La Motte, and there I read Belisarius to him. His sensibility was naturally small, yet, on this occasion, he shewed a good deal. After having interested him, I disclosed my apprehensions of hostility from the Sorbonne, and asked him if he

thought the parliament would condemn my book, in case of its receiving their censure. He assured me that the parliament would take no part in the business, and promised to be my defender in case any person should attack me.

This was not all. A privilege was necessary, with the assurance of its not being revoked. I had no personal interest with old Maupeou, then keeper of the seals. But Madame Merlin, my bookseller's wife, was known and protected by him. I made her feel his pulse, and he promised us every kind of favour.

I had still precautions to take, with a view to the court, and here the dangerous part of my book was not theology. I dreaded being accused of allusions, of ill-natured applications, and of having had some one else than Justinian in view, while I drew the picture of a weak and deluded monarch. Unhappily there was but too much analogy between the two reigns: of this, the king of Prussia was

so sensible, that when he had received my book, he wrote, with his own hand, at the foot of a letter from his secretary Lecat; 'I have just read the beginning of your Belisarius; you are a bold man.' Others might say the same; and if my enemies attacked me from this quarter, I was undone.

There was no possibility, however, of taking any direct precautions against this danger. The least anxiety shewn on my part would have roused their vigilance, and led to a public accusation. No one would have ventured either to encourage me, or to promise assistance; and the first advice that I should have received would have been to throw my work into the fire, or to omit every thing which could be capable of such an application; and how much must I then have omitted!

I assumed an air the very reverse of anxiety. I wrote to the Count de Saint-Florentin, minister of the king's household, that I was on the eve of publishing

a work, the subject of which appeared to me worthy of interesting the heart of the king; that I was exceedingly desirous of being allowed to dedicate it to his majesty; and that, when I should give it to him (the minister) to examine, I would beg him to solicit this favour for me. With that view, I asked a moment's audience, and he granted it.

When I communicated my manuscript, I owned to him confidentially, that there was a chapter with which bigotted theologians might not be satisfied. 'It is therefore,' said I, 'very desirable for me, that the secret should not get vent: and I beg you, my lord, not to allow my manuscript to go out of your closet.' As he entertained a friendship for me, he promised this, and kept his word. But some days after, on returning my work, which he had read, or made somebody read to him, he said, 'That the religion of Belisarius would not be relished by theologians; that probably my book would be censured, and that, on that account only,

he dared not propose that the king should accept of the dedication.' Upon which I begged him to be so good as keep my secret, and withdrew quite satisfied.

What indeed was my object? I wished to have somebody at court who could bear witness to the design I had entertained of dedicating my work to the king, which would be a proof that nothing had been farther from my thoughts, than to write a satire upon his reign; than which nothing could be more true. With such a means of defence, my apprehensions from this quarter too were dispelled. But I was obliged to pass under the eyes of a censor; and, instead of one, two were given me; for the literary censor dared not undertake to approve of what concerned theology.

Belisarius was thus subjected to the examination of a doctor of the Sorbonne. He was called Chevrier. Eight days after I had given him my work, I called upon him. He returned it to me, and praised it highly; but when I threw my eyes on

the last sheet, his approbation did not appear. 'Be so good then,' said I, 'as write two words here.' He answered with a smile. 'What! sir,' urged I, 'do you not approve it?'—'No, sir; God forbid!' replied he, mildly.—'And may I know at least what appears to you so reprehensible?'—'Little in detail, but much when taken all altogether; and the author knows too well the spirit in which he wrote his book, to expect that I should give it my approbation.' I was going to urge him to explain himself. 'No, sir,' said he; 'you understand me very well; I understand you too; let us not lose time in saying more; but seek another censor.' Luckily I found one who was less difficult, and Belisarius was printed.

As soon as it appeared, the Sorbonne was in an uproar; and the sage doctors determined to pass sentence upon it. This censure was still regarded by many as a very formidable affair; and among this number were many of my friends. The alarm spread among them. Some

advised me if possible to appease the fury of these doctors; others, more firm, more jealous of my philosophical honour, exhorted me not to bend. I desired both not to be uneasy, told my secret to no one, and began with watching the judgment of the public.

My book was eagerly purchased; the first edition was sold off; I pushed on the second, I hastened the third. Nine thousand copies were circulated before the Sorbonne had extracted what they meant to censure: and thanks to the noise they made on the subject of the fifteenth chapter, no other was spoken of: it was as good to me as the tail of Alcibiades's dog. I was delighted to see the service the doctors were doing me, by turning the attention of men into another direction. The thing for me was to appear neither timid nor rebellious, and to gain time till the editions of my book were multiplied and spread over Europe. I stood therefore in a defensive attitude, without appearing either to dread

the Sorbonne, or to brave it; when a man who, since that time, has had powerful enemies to encounter, the Abbé Georgel, came and invited me to take the archbishop as a mediator, assuring me, that, if I called upon him, I should meet with a good reception, and that he knew him to be disposed to negociate an accommodation between me and the faculty. Nothing suited my plan better than a system of conciliation. I called upon the prelate: he received me with a paternal look, and always called me my dear M. Marmontel. I was affected by the kindness which seemed to be expressed by these friendly words. I have since learned that it was his lordship's usual address to people of little consequence.

I assured him of my sincerity, my respect for religion, my desire to leave no obscurity upon my doctrine and that of my book, and I asked as a favour permission to give an explanation to the doctors, in his presence, upon every point which appeared to them reprehensible in this

book. He seemed to be pleased with this character of a mediator, of a restorer of peace. He promised to act accordingly; and desired me, on my side, to call upon the syndic of the faculty, Doctor Riballier, and to give my explanation to him.

I called upon Riballier. Our conversations, and my correspondence with him, are printed; to these I refer you.

The other doctors, who were assembled by the archbishop at his house of Conflans, to which I went to confer with them, were not quite so unfair as Riballier. But, in our conferences, they too indulged in the habit of falsifying passages, and perverting their meaning. I armed myself with patience and moderation, rectified the text which they had altered, explained to them my thoughts, and offered to insert these explanations as notes to my book. The archbishop was very well satisfied, but these gentlemen were not. The Abbé le Fevre, an old caviller, who was only known in the school by the name of *La Grande Cateau*,

at length concluded with saying, 'All your explanations are vain; the fifteenth chapter of your book must absolutely disappear; it is there that the venom lies.'

'If what you ask were possible,' replied I, 'perhaps I might do it for the sake of peace. But there are now forty thousand copies of my book spread over Europe; and in all the editions which have been and will be finished, the fifteenth chapter is and will always be printed. Where then would be the use of publishing an edition in which it is omitted? This mutilated edition would be published by nobody; it would be money lost both to myself and my bookseller.'—'Well then,' said he, 'your book will be censured without mercy.'—'Yes, sir,' said I, 'I expect no mercy if it be you who compose the censure. But his lordship will bear witness for me, that I have done every thing which you could reasonably require, in order to soften your anger.'

Yes, my dear M. Marmontel,' said the archbishop, 'I have been satisfied in many respects with your sincerity and docility. But there is one article upon which I demand a formal recantation; it is that of toleration.'—'If your lordship,' said I, 'will just cast your eyes upon some lines which I wrote this morning, you will see an express declaration of my private opinion upon this subject, and of the grounds upon which it rests.' I presented him with this note, which you will find printed at the end of Belisarius. He silently read it, and handed it over to the doctors. 'Very good,' said they; 'common-place arguments, repeated a thousand times, and a thousand times refuted; the refuse of the schools.'—'You treat very contemptuously,' said I, 'the authority of the fathers of the church, and that of Saint Paul, by whom my reasonings are supported.' They replied, that the writings of the fathers of the church were an arsenal in which all parties found arms, and that the passage

of Saint Paul, which I alleged, proved nothing.

'Well,' inquired I, 'since your authority is to be the only law, what do you ask?'—'The right of the sword,' said they, 'to exterminate heresy, irreligion, impiety, and to bring the whole world under the yoke of the true faith.'

This was what I expected, that I might retire in good order, and entrench myself in a post where they could not attack me. *Præmunitum, atque ex omni parte causæ septum.* (De Or. l. 3.) I therefore replied, 'that the sword was one of those carnal weapons which Saint Paul had censured, when he said, *Arma militiæ nostræ non carnalia sunt;*' and after these words I was going away. The prelate retained me, and squeezing my hands within his, conjured me, with a tenderness which was truly laughable, to subscribe this atrocious dogma. 'No, my lord,' said I; 'had I signed it, I should have thought my pen dipped in blood; I should have thought myself approving all

the cruelties committed in the name of religion.'—'So,' said Le Fevre, with his doctorial insolence, 'you attach great importance and authority to your own opinion?'—'I know sir,' said I, 'that my authority is nothing; but I set some value upon my conscience, which forbids me in the name of humanity, and of religion itself, to approve persecution. *Defendenda religio est, non occidendo, sed moriendo; non sævitia, sed patientia,—si sanguine, si tormentis, si malo religionem defendere velis; jam non defendetur, sed polluetur atque violabitur.* This is the opinion of Lactantius; it is also that of Tertullian, and of Saint Paul; and you will permit me to believe that these were at least as good men as you.'

'Come,' said he to his brethren, 'there is no more to be said. The gentleman will be censured, and he shall be so.' Thus ended our conferences, from which I had extracted the most precious result. It was now no little theological chicane in which I should have been exposed to

their scholastic wranglings; it was a matter of controversy brought to the plainest and most striking terms. They have attempted, I could say, to make me acknowledge the right of imposing belief by force, of employing the sword, tortures, the scaffold, and the flames; they have attempted to make me approve of preaching the gospel sword in hand: this is the abominable doctrine which I have refused to subscribe. Such is the ground on which the Abbé le Fevre has declared that I should be censured without mercy. This statement, which I took care to spread through the city, the court, the parliament, and the councils, rendered the Sorbonne odious; at the same time, my friends exerted themselves in order to render it ridiculous; and for that, I could perfectly rely on them.

The first operation of the theological faculty had been to extract from my book the propositions that were worthy of condemnation. It was an object of emulation who should have the glory of

discovering the greatest number. They searched them out curiously like pearls, every one zealously adding to the heap. Having collected thirty-seven, and thinking this number sufficient, they published the list under the title of '*Indiculus.*' Voltaire added the epithet of '*Ridiculus.*' Never did adjective and substantive agree better together; *Indiculus Ridiculus* seemed made for each other, and they continued inseparable. M. Turgot played upon the folly of the doctors in a different manner. As he was himself a good theologian, and a still better logician, he laid it down first as an evident and universally acknowledged principle, that of two contradictory propositions, if one is false, the other is necessarily true. He then exposed upon two opposite and parallel columns the thirty-seven propositions censured by the Sorbonne, and the thirty-seven contradictory propositions most correctly made out. There could be no medium: the faculty, while it condemned the one, necessarily adopted and

professed the others. Now, among the latter, there was not a single one which was not either horrible or ludicrously absurd. This ray of light thrown upon the doctrine of the Sorbonne, struck them like a thunderbolt. In vain did they attempt to withdraw their *Indiculus*; it was too late, the blow was given.

Voltaire undertook to drag through the mire the syndic Riballier, and his scribe Cogé, a professor at the same college (Mazarin), of which Riballier was principal, and who had written, from his dictating, a calumnious libel against Belisarius and myself. At the same time, Voltaire, with those arms of ridicule which he wielded so skilfully, fell with his utmost might upon the whole Sorbonne; and his little sheets, which came from Geneva, and which circulated rapidly through Paris, amused the public at the expence of the faculty. Some of my friends, who understood both reasoning and raillery, were also so charitable as to undertake my defence; so that, before

the decree of the theological tribunal appeared, it was already disgraced and scouted.

While the Sorbonne, rendered still more furious by these attacks, were labouring with all their might to make Belisarius a heretic, a deist, an enemy to the throne and to the altar, (for these were the two great weapons with which they fought), I was constantly receiving letters from the sovereigns of Europe, and from the wisest and most enlightened men, in which they extolled my book; which, they said, ought to be the breviary of kings. The empress of Russia had translated it into her native language, and had dedicated the translation to an archbishop of that country. The empress queen of Hungary, who was so strict with respect to writings levelled against religion, had, in spite of the archbishop of Vienna, ordered it to be printed in her dominions. I neglected not, as you may well suppose, to make the court and parliament acquainted with this

universal success; and neither the one nor the other felt any desire to share the ridicule of the Sorbonne.

Things being in this state, I found my presence no longer necessary in Paris; so that the time which was employed by the doctors in manufacturing their decree of censure, was spent by me in fulfilling the sacred duties of friendship.

Madame Filleul was dying of a slow fever, occasioned by a sharp humour in her blood, for which Bouvart, the most skilful of our physicians, had ordered the waters and baths of Aix-la-Chapelle. She was attended by the young Countess de Seran; but, in the state in which the patient was, the assistance of a male friend was necessary. Their friend Bouret besought me to accompany them. I considered it as a duty; and as soon as they heard my reply, Madame de Seran wrote me the following note:

'Is it indeed true that you are coming with us to the waters? No, I cannot believe it. It was the object of my utmost

desire, but I did not dare to make it an object of hope. Your employments, your business, your pleasures, are all against it. Give me the assurance yourself, if you wish me to be convinced of it; and if you give it, believe that I will value this mark of friendship above all those which I have met with in life. Madame Filleul dares not hope it any more than I. But you would perhaps be determined by the desire she shews, and the gratitude she expresses.'

I set out with them. Madame Filleul was so ill, and Madame de Seran so fully expected to see her friend die on the road, that she advised me to provide myself with mourning. We arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle with this courageous woman, who, though she had scarcely a breath of life remaining, continued still to laugh at our assumed gaiety. We sent for the physician belonging to the waters: he found her too weak to bear the bath, and began with getting her to make a very mild trial of the waters. Their virtue was

such as to produce an eruption of the humour, which restored the patient to life, and in a few days she recovered her strength, and was able to bear the bath. Then a prodigious change was wrought by a kind of miracle. The eruption became complete over her whole body, and the patient was so far recovered as to be able to walk out, so that we could not but admire the progress of her recovery, her appetite, and the increase of strength. Alas! notwithstanding all our remonstrances and our prayers, she abused this speedy recovery, and would no longer observe the moderate regimen which was prescribed; yet, notwithstanding her intemperance, she would have been saved, had it not been for the fatal imprudence of which, without our knowledge, she was guilty, just as her cure was completed. M. de Marigny, whose sister was dead, wishing to take a wife to his own mind, such as he thought would make him happy, had married the eldest daughter of Madame Filleul, the idol of us all;

the beautiful, the sprightly, the charming Julia. In compliance with the desire which his wife felt to see her mother, he brought her to us, and, at the same time, set out along with Cochin, the celebrated artist, on a tour through Holland and Brabant, with the view of seeing the pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools.

I have described to you the character of this respectable, interesting, and unfortunate man. In his young wife were united all the charms which can be desired in a person of her age, as well in point of external appearance, as of mind and character, mildness, ingenuity, kindness, gaiety, and wit, nay, even very sound good sense, and all cultivated with the greatest care. But, tormented as he was by a gloomy and suspicious self-love, scarce was he married when he took it into his head to be jealous of the tenderness which she felt for her mother, and of the friendship which united her from childhood with Madame de Seran. He was witness to their mutual sensibility at

meeting; but he concealed the vexation it occasioned, and the short time he spent with us was not darkened by any cloud. He even expressed very affectionate sentiments for Madame Filleul. 'I leave,' said he, 'our dear Julia with you.' It is perfectly right that she should pay attention to her mother's health. I will come in a short time and carry her back, hoping then to find your health, which is so valuable to us all, completely restored.' He said also agreeable things to the Countess de Seran, and left us all convinced of his being perfectly tranquil. But in his character, the least particle of ill-humour was like a leaven which quickly fermented, and communicated its own nature to the whole mass of thought. As soon as he was alone and left to himself, he figured his wife, now she was with her mother, forgetting him, feeling more at liberty, and expressing to us her pleasure at his absence. 'She did not love him, she did not live for him, and he was far from being the object most dear to

her in the world.' Such were the reflections which revolved in his wretched brain. He had more than once communicated to me the dismal secret. Yet the letters he wrote during the whole of his tour were very agreeable, and till his return we discovered nothing of what was going on in his mind. Let us leave him to his travels, and talk a little of the life which we led at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Though we could not prevent Madame Filleul, who was naturally lively, wilful, and fond of good living, from doing every thing that was possible to retard her cure; yet the virtue of the waters and baths was sufficient to expel the new sources of acrimony which she every day poured into her blood, in the form of rich sauces and ragouts, whose seasoning was absolute poison for her. She boasted of being cured; and though we were not quite so much convinced of it as she was, we thought we had much reason to rejoice. Our ladies therefore took all the amusements of the watering-place, which I

shared with them. In the afternoon we walked; and in the evening we went to the dance at the Ridotto, where there was very high gaming; but none of us played. The dances were all English, both very pretty and very well executed. It was a curious spectacle for me to see these chains of men and women, from all the northern nations, Russians, Poles, Germans, and particularly English, assembled and drawn together by the common attraction of pleasure. I need not tell you, that two French ladies, of singular beauty, the eldest of whom was just twenty, drew attention and homage wherever they appeared. When their admirers therefore were attending them, either in the morning walk to the waters, or sometimes at their own house, I had solitary hours. I spent these in composition. I was writing the *Incas*.

At this time, two of our French bishops came to the waters, and took lodgings in our neighbourhood. One of these, Broglio, bishop of Noyon, was ill; the other,

who was Marboeuf, bishop of Autun, and since minister for the church, came to attend him. They were curious to see the author of the book which the Sorbonne was then censuring. They called upon me, and invited me to walk with them. I saw clearly that these prelates wished to toss the ball with me; and as I liked the game very well, I willingly became their match.

They began, as you may suppose, with talking of Belisarius. They expected to find me much alarmed at the decree which the Sorbonne was about to fulminate; and they were much surprised to see me so tranquil under their anathema. 'Belisarius,' said I, 'is an old soldier, a worthy man, and a christian at heart; he loves his religion sincerely and cordially; he believes all that is taught in the gospel, and rejects only what that volume does not contain. Belisarius refuses only to believe in the gloomy phantoms of superstition, and in the monstrous horrors of fanaticism. I have proposed to

the Sorbonne to render this distinction evident, by explanatory notes added to my book. They have refused this conciliatory proposition; they have required me to expunge the fifteenth chapter from a book of which forty thousand copies are already circulated: a childish demand; for a mutilated edition, which no one will purchase, could have had no effect but to ruin me. In short, they have obstinately demanded, that I should acknowledge the doctrine of civil intolerance, the right of the sword, the lawfulness of proscription, of exile, of the dungeon, the dagger, the rack, and the flames, for forcing men to believe in the religion of the Lamb; so that, in the lamb of the gospel, I could discover only the tiger of the inquisition. I have adhered to the doctrine of Lactantius, of Tertullian, of Saint Paul, and to the spirit of the gospel. This is the reason why the Sorbonne is now busy, manufacturing a decree of censure, which it will fulminate against Belisarius, Lactantius, Tertullian, Saint Paul, and every one

who thinks as they do. Take care of yourselves, my lords, for you may happen to be one of the number.'

'But what occasion,' said the bishop of Autun, 'have philosophers to speak of theology?'—'What occasion,' replied I, 'have theologians to tyrannize over men's minds, and excite princes to employ force in doing violence to men's belief? Are princes qualified to judge upon subjects of faith and doctrine?'—'No, certainly,' said he; 'princes are not judges.'—'But you would have them for your executioners.'—'I know not,' replied he, 'why the theologians should now be accused of a kind of persecution, which is no longer practised. Never did the church use her power with so much moderation.'—'It is true, my lord,' said I, 'that the church does use it more temperately; this she does with a view of preserving it.'—'Why then,' urged he, 'should you fix upon this time for attacking it?'—'Because,' replied I, 'we write not for the present moment only; because it is to be

feared that the future may resemble the past; and because, when the waters are low, it is the proper time for labouring at the dikes.'—'Ah!' said he, 'they who overturn the dikes are the pretended philosophers; and they aim at nothing less than the destruction of religion.'—'Only,' replied I, 'let this charitable, beneficent, and peaceful religion retain its own character, and I will venture to assure you, that the unbeliever himself will not dare to attack it. Neither its pure doctrines, nor its morality, nor even its mysteries, raise enemies against it. But a number of intelligent men revolt at the violent and fanatical opinions with which it has been contaminated by a dark and inhuman theology. Let it be freed from this mixture; let it be restored to its primitive sanctity; and then those who attack it will be the open enemies of the unhappy, the oppressed, and the weak, whom it comforts and supports.'

'You may say what you please,' replied the bishop, 'its doctrine is fixed,

the edifice is well cemented, and we will never suffer a single stone to be removed.' I desired them to observe, that the art of mining was carried to a great height; that by means of a little powder very high and solid towers were overturned from their foundation; and even the hardest rocks were broken. 'Heaven forbid,' continued I, 'that I should wish the accomplishment of this prophecy: I sincerely love, I revere from the bottom of my soul, this consolatory religion; but if ever it perishes from among us, theological fanaticism will be the sole cause, and with its own hand, will have struck the mortal blow.'

He then went to a little distance from me, and I thought I heard him whispering to the bishop of Noyon, *It will last longer than we.* He was mistaken. He then returned to me, and urged, 'If you love religion, why should you join those who are planning its destruction?'—'I join those only,' replied I, 'who love it like myself, and who desire it to appear

as it came down from heaven, pure, without mixture, and without stain; *sicut aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol.*'—He added, smiling, '*terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.*'—'Yes,' replied I, 'it is terrible to the wicked, to the fanatical, to the impious; but its terrors are all in the future, and are inspired by arms of its own, which are neither sword nor fire.' This was nearly the tenor of our first conversation.

At another time, as he constantly repeated that the philosophers took too much liberty.....'It is true, my lord,' said I, 'that they sometimes contrive to supply your place in very exalted functions; but they are such only as you yourselves do not deign to perform.'—'What functions?' inquired he.—'Those of preaching upon the house-tops truths which are too seldom told to sovereigns, to their ministers, to the flatterers who surround them. Since the exile of Fenelon, or, if you please, since the short course of affecting morality, which Massillon gave to

Lewis XV, when a child, instructions which were useless from being premature, have public vices and public crimes found one courageous assailant among the priesthood? In the pulpit, you venture indeed to touch upon little weaknesses, upon ordinary frailties; but who dares to attack the desolating passions, the scourges of nations, in short, the moral fountains, whence flow the sufferings of humanity. Who dares to call pride, ambition, vain glory, false zeal, the furious desire of reigning, and of conquering,—who dares to call them to account before God and man for the tears and blood of their innumerable victims?' I then supposed a Chrysostom in the pulpit; and while I enlarged on the subjects which would call forth his eloquence, perhaps I was eloquent myself.

However this may be, my two prelates, after having twice or thrice felt my pulse, found the disease incurable; till one day, shewing the manuscript of the Incas on my table, I said to them, 'Here is a

work which will reduce your doctors to the alternative either of burning the gospel, or of respecting in Las Casas, the apostle of the Indies, the same sentiments and the same doctrine which they condemn in Belisarius.' They then saw that there was nothing more to hope; and their zeal being damped, or rather their curiosity satisfied, I was left at liberty to dispose of a time which we were throwing away, they in attempting to make me a theological philosopher, and I in attempting to make them philosophical theologians.

The Incas, which still required a good deal of labour, was interrupted for some time, and gave place to a memorial in which I undertook, to plead the cause of the peasantry of the north, and which is printed in the collection of my works.

I had just read in the Gazette, that a person, whose name was concealed, proposed to the economical society of Petersburgh, a prize of a thousand ducats, for the best work upon the following question: 'Is it advantageous for a state,

that the peasant should be a proprietor of land, or should he possess only moveable goods? and how far is it for the advantage of the state, that the right of the peasant over his property should extend.'

I had no doubt that this question was proposed by the empress of Russia herself; and since she wished the truth on this great subject to be known in her dominions, I resolved to declare it without reserve. One of the Russian ministers, M. de Saldern, had come to Aix-la-Chapelle, for the benefit of the waters. I saw him often; and he spoke of northern affairs as frankly as can be done by a prudent minister. It was through him that my memorial reached its destination. It did not, as I had foreseen, obtain the prize; but I received assurances of its having made a considerable impression.

Thus my solitary hours were filled up, and usefully employed. But a mode of spending my time, which was no less interesting, and, to confess the truth, still

more attractive than study, was the conversation of the three ladies, whose characters were all different, but so well according, that their colours united and blended with each other, like those of the rainbow. Now, it is from this harmonious mixture of sentiments and thoughts, that the charm of conversation results. Unanimity of sentiment, though agreeable at first, becomes in the end tiresome. Accordingly, Madame Filleul used to say, that she liked difference of opinion; that nothing else was genuine and sincere; that nature never made any two things exactly alike; neither two eggs, nor two leaves of trees, nor two minds and characters; and that, wherever there appeared to be a constant similarity of feelings and opinions, there was dissimulation and complaisance on one side, and frequently on both.

One of the three, Madame de Seran, had admitted me to her confidence; and the subject of this confidence was of such a nature as to give rise to interesting pri-

vate conversations. She might, had she chosen, have succeeded to Madame de Pompadour. She carried on a constant correspondence with the king; he wrote her by every post; and these letters and replies were all shewn to me. The thread of this little story had been formed as follows:

Madame de Seran was the daughter of a M. de Bulioud, a man of good family, but of no fortune, who had formerly been governor of the pages to the duke of Orleans. By one of the strangest fatalities, which I am unable to explain, this young person, from the time she was fifteen, had been the object of her father's gloomy and violent dislike. She was beautiful as the goddess of love, and still more interesting by her kindness and native innocence, than by the lustre of her beauty; she wept and lamented in this cruel and dismal situation, when her father suddenly formed the resolution of marrying her, by assigning, as a portion, his appointment of governor of the pages,

which he yielded to his son-in-law. This husband, with whom he presented her, was also a gentleman of ancient family, whose whole fortune consisted of a little estate in Normandy. But, besides being poor, M. de Seran was ugly, and had something disgusting in his ugliness: red-haired, ill-made, with only one eye, in which there was a cataract; but, with all these defects, the worthiest and the best of men. When he was presented to our fair Adelaide, she grew pale with horror, and her heart revolted against him with disgust and repugnance. The presence of her parents led her, as much as possible, to conceal this first impression, but M. de Seran perceived it. He asked a few moments of private conversation with her; and when they were alone, he said, 'Mademoiselle, you think me very ugly, and you shrink from me. I see this; you have no occasion to conceal it. If you believe this repugnance to be invincible, speak to me as your friend; the secret shall be kept; I will take the rup-

ture upon myself; neither your father nor mother shall know any thing of the acknowledgment you have made. Nevertheless, were it possible to make you endure in a husband these injuries of nature, and, for this purpose, were the attentions and complaisance of a kind and tender friendship sufficient, you might confidently expect these from a man whose soul is honourable, and who, through his whole life, would feel grateful for your not having rejected him. Consult your own mind, and answer me; you are at perfect liberty.'

Adelaide was so unhappy; this worthy man had evidently so sincere a desire of procuring her a milder fate, that she was in hopes of being able to summon courage sufficient to accept him. 'Sir,' said she, 'the speech I have heard, the stamp of goodness and uprightness which this language bears, inspires me with the most sincere esteem for you. Give me twenty-four hours to think of it, and come back to-morrow.'

The most urgent counsels of reason and misfortune were necessary to determine her; but, at last, the esteem which she felt for M. de Seran triumphed over all her disgust. 'Sir,' said she, when he returned, 'I am convinced that ugliness, as well as beauty, is forgotten; and that the only qualities whose impression is not weakened by habit, and whose value, on the contrary, is every day better felt, are the qualities of the mind. These I find in you, and that is enough; and I trust to your honour for making me happy. It is my wish to make you the same.'

In this manner was Mademoiselle de Bulioud married before she was quite fifteen; and M. de Seran was every thing to her that he had promised to be. I do not say that this union had the charms of love; but it was made agreeable by peace, by friendship, by the tenderest esteem. The husband felt no anxiety in seeing his wife surrounded with adorers; and the wife, by her steady and proper conduct, justified in the eyes of

the public this confidence of her husband.

Nevertheless, as it was impossible to see, to hear, and, above all, to be acquainted with her, without wishing her to be in more prosperous circumstances, her friends interested themselves in the advancement of her fortune; and at the marriage of the Duke de Chartres, they formed the design of procuring her an honourable situation with the young princess. But for that purpose, an ancient and pure nobility was not sufficient, unless she had been presented to the king: such was the etiquette at the court of Orleans. This, however, was bestowed only on those who could trace their nobility four hundred years back. Upon this footing she was entitled to the honour, and it was granted. But the king, after listening more attentively to the praises of her beauty, than to the proofs of her nobility, gave his consent, only on condition that, after being presented, she should go and thank him; an article

which was concealed from M. de Seran, and which was not expected even by his wife; for in real good earnest, she aimed only at the place which was promised her in the duke of Orleans' court; and when she was required to go alone to the rendezvous which the king gave her in his private apartments, and to thank him in person, I know that she trembled exceedingly. Nevertheless she went; and I arrived at Madame de Filleul's just as they were waiting her return. There it was that I learned what I have mentioned; and I saw well that her friends had considered the place at the court of Orleans as only a specious pretext, and considered the present rendezvous as the important object.

I had the pleasure of seeing ambition raise its castles in the air: the young countess was to be omnipotent, the king and the court were to be at her feet, while all her friends would be loaded with favours, and I myself, honoured with the confidence of the mistress, might

through her make the king do all the good I wished: nothing could be so fine. The company expected the young sovereign, they counted every minute, they died with impatience to see her arrive; and yet they were very glad at her being so long of arriving.

At last she does arrive, and gives us an account of all that had passed. A page of the bed-chamber waited for her at the gate of the chapel; it was quite dark; she went up by a concealed staircase, into the private apartments. She had not long to wait for the king. He had accosted her with an agreeable air, had taken her hands, had pressed them respectfully, and, on seeing her apprehensive, had encouraged her by gentle words, and a look full of kindness. He then made her sit down opposite to him, congratulated her upon the success of the appearance she had made, and said that every one agreed, nothing so handsome had ever appeared in his court. 'Then,' said she, 'it must be true, sire,

that happiness makes us beautiful; and in that case, I should be still handsomer now.'—'Accordingly you are so,' said he, taking my hands, and gently squeezing them in his, which were then trembling. After a moment's silence, in which his looks alone spoke, he asked me what place at court I should be ambitious to obtain? I answered, the place of the Princess d'Armagnac: (she was an old friend of the king, who was lately dead). —'Ah!' said he, 'you are very young to supply the place of a friend who was present at my birth, who held me upon her knees, and whom I have loved from my cradle. Time, madam, is necessary to obtain my confidence. I have been so often deceived.'—'Oh!' said I, 'I will not deceive you: and if time only is necessary to deserve the exalted title of your friend, I have that to give you.'— This language, from a person only twenty, surprised, but did not displease, him. Changing the subject, he asked me if I thought his private apartments furnished

with taste? 'No,' said I; 'I should like them blue.' As blue is his favourite colour, he was flattered by this reply. I added, that in every other respect, they appeared to me charming. 'If you like them,' said he, 'I hope you will sometimes be so good as come, (every Sunday, for instance), at the same hour as now.'— I assured him that I would avail myself of every opportunity of paying my court to him. Upon which he left me, and went to sup with his children. He made an appointment for this day se'ennight, at the same hour. I give you all warning, therefore, that I shall be the king's friend, and that I will never be any thing more."

As this resolution was formed, not only by her head, but by her heart, she adhered to it; of this I had full proof. At the second meeting she found the drawing-room furniture blue, according to her desire; a very delicate piece of attention. She went there every Sunday; and through Janel, the postmaster-ge-

neral, she often, in the interval between these meetings, received letters, written by the king himself. In these letters, however, which I have seen, he never went beyond the bounds of a respectful gallantry; and the answers she wrote, full of wit, grace, and delicacy, were flattering to his vanity, but never to his love. Madame de Seran had, in an infinite degree, that easy wit, which, being quite natural and agreeable, delights those who have much wit, and pleases those who have little. The king's self-love, however difficult to satisfy, had been soon at ease with her. After their second meeting, the moments, which preceded the royal supper, appeared to him so short, that he begged her to be so good as to wait, and allow a little supper to be served up to her, promising to abridge his own as much as possible, in order to return and be a few moments longer with her. As he had a small library in his apartments, she one evening asked for some agreeable book to amuse her in his absence; and

the king desiring her to make a choice, she was so kind and attentive to me as to name Belisarius. 'I have it not,' replied the king; 'it is the only one of Marmontel's works, which he has not given me.'—'Then, sire,' said she, 'choose yourself a book which may amuse and interest me.'—'I hope,' said he, 'that this will;' and he gave her a collection of poems, written upon the subject of his recovery. This furnished her, after supper, with a rich and ample fund of praise; the more flattering, because genius was there employed to express feeling. Had the king been young, and animated by that fire which inspires boldness, and makes it be forgiven, I would not have sworn that the young countess, however well-disposed, would never have found any danger in these private interviews. But the feeble and timid desire of a man who was worn out by pleasures more than by years, stood in need of encouragement; and it received none from her air of decency, of reserve, and of

modesty. Of this, the young lady was quite sensible. 'Accordingly,' said she, 'I am certain he will never dare to be any thing more than my friend, and I am quite satisfied.'

Yet she one day talked to him of his mistresses, and asked if he had ever been really in love? He replied that he had, with Madame de Chateauroux. 'And with Madame de Pompadour?'—'No,' said he; 'I never felt any love for her.'—'Yet you retained her as long as she lived.'—'Yes; because, had I dismissed her, it would have killed her.' There was nothing very seducing in this frankness; nor did Madame de Seran ever feel any temptation to succeed a woman whom the king had retained only out of pity.

She was on this footing with him, when she and I left all, to accompany our sick and dying friend to Aix-la-Chapelle.

Madame de Seran regularly, by every post, received a letter from the king,

through the good offices of Janel: she communicated to me both these letters, and her answers; and continued to do so as long as their correspondence lasted; so that I am an ocular witness to the purity of this connection. The letters of the king were full of expressions, which left no room for doubt. 'You are only too respectable....Allow me to kiss your hands....Allow me, in absence at least to embrace you.'—He spoke to her of the death of the dauphin, whom he called 'our sacred hero;' and said to her, that her absence deprived him of consolations which he much wanted on so cruel a loss. Such was his language; and he would not have been so complaisant as to disguise in this manner the style of a happy lover. I shall have occasion to speak again of these letters of the king, and of the impression which they produced upon a mind less easily convinced than mine. Meanwhile, I may observe, that the king, at his age, was not sorry to have an opportunity of tasting the

charms of a sentimental union; the more flattering and agreeable, that it was new, and that it sensibly affected him without endangering his vanity.

Though the noise which Belisarius made, and the celebrity which the Moral Tales possessed in the north of Europe, had already given me sufficient distinction among the crowd of those with whom I lived, a very honourable adventure made me the object of new attention. One morning, as we were passing before the great hotel, where the Ridotto was held, I heard myself called by name. I looked up, and saw at the window whence the voice came, a man, who immediately cried out, 'It is himself,' and disappeared. I had not recognized him; but he instantly came out from the inn, ran up, and took me in his arms, exclaiming, 'What a happy meeting!' It was the Prince of Brunswick. 'Come,' continued he, 'let me introduce you to my wife; this will make her very happy.' We then went in, and he said, 'Madam, you were

so desirous to be acquainted with the author of Belisarius, and the Moral Tales —here he is; I introduce him to you.' Her royal highness, sister to the queen of England, received me with the same joy and cordiality with which the prince introduced me. At this very time, the magistrates of the city were waiting for them at the fountain, to make it be opened in their presence, that they might see the concretion of pure sulphur that was formed in stalactites under the stone of the reservoir; a species of honour that was shewn only to persons of the first distinction. 'Go there by yourself,' said the prince to his wife; 'I will spend these moments more agreeably with Marmontel.' I wished to decline this favour; but was obliged to continue with him at least a quarter of an hour, which he employed in talking with enthusiasm of the literary men whom he had met at Paris, and of the happy hours he had spent in their company. He then told me, that the afflicting idea which our

society had left in his mind, was the necessity of renouncing all hope of prevailing upon us to leave our country; for that no sovereign in Europe was so rich, or so powerful, as to make us any compensation for the happiness of living together.

I found at last that the only means of prevailing upon him to go to the fountain, was to express a desire of seeing it opened myself; and I had the honour of attending him.

As they were to set out next day, the princess was so good as ask me to spend the evening with them at the Ridotto. The moment I arrived, she gave over dancing, of which she was passionately fond, that she might come and talk with me. Till one, next morning, she, the lady who accompanied her (Miss Stuart), and I, remained in a corner, conversing upon every thing which this amiable princess chose to inquire into. It is possible that her kindness might produce a deception upon me, but her conversation ap-

peared to me agreeable and full of wit. 'How then,' said I, 'have you been educated, in order to retain this adorable simplicity of character? how little you resemble the persons of your rank whom I have hitherto seen!'—'Because,' replied Miss Stuart, 'at your court princes are taught to reign, whereas at ours they are taught to please.'

The princess, before leaving me, was so kind as ask my promise to take a journey to England, at the time she was to be there. 'I will do you the honours of that country,' said she; (these are her words); 'and I will myself present you to the king my brother.' I promised that, unless some unsurmountable obstacle intervened, I would pay my court to her at London; and I took leave of her and her worthy husband, sincerely affected by the marks of kindness which I had received from both. I did not feel any increase of pride; but in the Ridotto circle, I thought I could perceive an increase of respect towards me. There

may seem, my children, to be a degree of vanity in relating these particulars to you; but it is of importance for you to know, that a little talent, joined to a plain and honourable conduct, makes a man universally esteemed.

Though Madame de Seran and Madame de Marigny were not ill, this did not prevent them from taking often the pleasure of bathing; and I heard them talk of the young girl who attended their bath, as a model whom sculptors would have gladly employed for the statue of Atalanta, of Diana, or even of Venus. Having a taste for the arts, I was curious to know this model that was so much extolled. I went to see the young bathing attendant. I found her really handsome, and almost as virtuous as she was handsome. We formed an acquaintance. One of her friends, who soon became mine, was so good as to allow us sometimes to go and take an evening repast in her little garden. This humble society, by bringing me nearer to simple nature,

restored me philosophy enough to preserve my mind in peace beside my two young ladies; a situation which otherwise could not but have been painful. After all, these entertainments were not ruinous; the whole expence consisted in a few little cakes, with a bottle of Moselle wine; and Madame Filleul, whom I had made my confident, secretly supplied me with little flasks of Malaga wine, which her attendant and I drank to her health. Alas! that health, which in spite of all her intemperance, continued still improving through the wonderful virtue of the baths, soon experienced a fatal revolution.

M. de Marigny returned from his journey to Holland; he meant to carry his wife back with him to Paris. But Madame Filleul having expressed how agreeable it would be if he would leave her daughter till the end of the watering season, which was not far distant, he yielded with apparent willingness to this desire of a sick mother; and as he wish-

ed to visit Spa on his way, our young ladies resolved to accompany him; they all urged me to take this little journey. A kind of secret presentiment made me very urgent to keep Madame Filleul company; but she herself, obstinately insisting upon being left alone, obliged me to depart. Bad omens preceded this unfortunate journey. The Messrs. Regewski, two Polish gentlemen, who were acquainted with our ladies, thought it would be a proper piece of gallantry to attend them on horseback. M. de Marigny no sooner saw them scampering by the side of the carriage, than he fell into bad humour; and from that moment the storm which rose in his mind continued to swell and become more tempestuous.

Yet, on our arrival at Spa, he came with us to the Ridotto; but the more brilliant it appeared, the more struck he was with the kind of emotion produced by the appearance of our young ladies, the darker grew his chagrin. Yet he would not demean himself so far, as to

appear jealous. He covered his ill humour under a more vague pretence.

At supper, as he was sitting gloomy and silent, Madame de Seran and his wife having urged him to declare the cause of his sadness, he at last answered, that he saw too well that his presence was burdensome; that after all he had done to gain his wife's affection, he was not beloved; that he was hated, detested; that the request of Madame Filleul was made in concert with his wife; that her object had been merely to get rid of him; that she had accompanied him to Spa merely for her own amusement; that he was not the dupe of this pretty behaviour, and knew very well how much she longed for his departure. She began to tell him that he was behaving unjustly; that if he had expressed the slightest unwillingness to leave her with her mother neither of them would have wished to abuse his complaisance; that even now, though she had left her trunks at Aix-la-Chapelle, she was resolved to set out

with him. 'No, madam,' said he; 'remain, it is too late; I wish for no sacrifices.'—'Certainly,' replied she, 'it is a sacrifice to leave my mother in her present situation; but there is none which I am not ready to make on your account.' —'I won't have any,' repeated he, rising from table. Madame de Seran was attempting to soothe him. 'As for you, madam,' said he, 'I am not speaking to you. I should then have too much to say. I only beg you won't interfere in any thing which passes between me and my wife.' He went out abruptly, and left us all three in consternation. After having consulted for a moment, we were of opinion that his wife should go to him. She was pale, and all in tears. In this condition she would have melted the heart of a tiger; but he, afraid of being softened by her presence, had given directions that she should not be admitted, and had ordered that post-horses should be put to his carriage by day-break. Of all masters, he was the most punctually obey-

ed. His valet-de-chambre represented that if he allowed his mistress to enter, he would be dismissed instantly; and that his master, in a fit of passion, would be capable of the most extreme violence. We hoped that sleep might calm him a little, and I only desired to be informed, the moment he awaked.

I had not slept, I was not even undressed when his servant came and told me he was rising. I entered his room, and, in the most affecting terms, represented to him the condition in which he left his wife. 'It is all hypocrisy,' said he; 'you do not understand the female character. I know it to my cost.' The presence of his servants forced me to be silent; and when he was going to set out, 'Adieu, my friend,' said he, squeezing my hand; 'pity the most unfortunate of men, adieu.' And with the same air with which he would have mounted the scaffold, he went into his carriage and drove off.

The grief of Madame de Marigny was then changed into indignation. 'He

throws me off,' said she; 'he wishes to alienate my heart from him; he will succeed. Heaven is my witness, how much I was disposed to love him; it would have been my delight and my pride to have made him happy; but he will not be happy, he has sworn that he will force me to hate him.'

We spent three days at Spa; the young ladies, in dispersing the sadness with which their mind was affected, and in reflecting upon the distressing consequences which this journey might produce. I did not yet foresee the still more cruel affliction which it was soon to occasion.

In proportion as the blood was purified in the veins of our patient, an eruption came out upon the skin, over her whole body, which dried of itself, and fell off in dust. It was this which had produced her recovery; and the moment that this impure part of the blood had begun to make its appearance outwardly, the physician had considered her as restored to life. But she was disgusted with this

eruption, and, thinking the cure too slow, wished to accelerate it. Taking advantage, with that view, of the period of our absence, she had covered her whole body with cerate. Immediately the transpiration of the humour had ceased, and we found the patient in a more desperate state than ever. She wished to return to Paris, but was with difficulty conducted thither, and continued ever after in a languishing condition.

That she might have time to rest on the road, we travelled by short stages. At Liege, where we had slept, a citizen, of very good appearance, called on me in the morning, and said, 'Sir, I learned yesterday evening that you were here. I lie under great obligations to you, and am come to thank you. My name is Bassompierre. I am a bookseller and printer in this city; I print your works, for which I have a great sale over all Germany. I have already published four large editions of your moral tales; I am busy with the third edition of Belisarius.'

—'What, sir,' said I, interrupting him, 'you first rob me of the fruit of my labour, and then you come and boast of it to myself!'—'Softly,' replied he; 'your privileges do not extend to us. Liege is a free town. We have a right to print every work we think fit; this is our trade. Provided you are not pirated in France, where your works have a privilege, you will be still abundantly rich. Do me the favour then to come and breakfast with me. You will see one of the finest printing offices in Europe, and you will be satisfied with the manner in which your works are executed.' I went to Bassompierre's house in order to see this execution. The breakfast that waited me was composed of cold meat and fish. My Liege friends entertained me in the best manner they could. I was at table between Bassompierre's two daughters, who said to me, as they poured out Rhenish wine, 'M. Marmontel, why should you go to Paris, where you are persecuted? Stay

here, live with our father; we have a handsome room to give you. We will take care of you. You shall compose at perfect ease; and what you have written in the evening, shall be printed next day.' I was almost tempted to accept the proposal. Bassompierre, by way of compensation for his piracies, presented me with the little edition of Moliere, which you read: it cost me ten thousand crowns.

At Brussels, I was curious to see a rich collection of pictures. The amateur, who had formed it, was (I believe) a chevalier Verule, a melancholy and vapourish man, who firmly believed that a breath of air would be mortal to him, and kept himself shut up at home as in a box. His cabinet was open only to persons of rank, or famous connoisseurs. I was neither; but after having formed some idea of his character, I was in hopes of obtaining a good reception. I got myself introduced to him. 'Do not wonder, sir,' said I, 'that a man of letters, who

at Paris is intimate with the most celebrated artists, and the amateurs of the fine arts, should wish to have it in his power to give them accounts of a man, for whom they all entertain the most distinguished esteem. They will understand that I have passed through Brussels, and would never forgive me had I omitted to call upon you, and inquire about the state of your health.'—'Ah, sir,' said he, 'my health is very poor;' and he began a long catalogue of his nervous complaints, of his vapours, of the excessive weakness of his organs. I listened; and after exhorting him to take care of himself, I was about to take my leave. 'What, sir,' said he, 'will you go without casting your eyes over my pictures?'—'I am not a judge of their merit, 'said I; 'I do not deserve the trouble it would cost you to shew them.' However, I allowed myself to be led on; and the first picture he pointed out was a very fine landscape by Berghen. 'Ah,' exclaimed I, 'I took that picture at first for a window through

which I saw the country, and these beautiful flocks.'—'This,' said he, with transport, 'is the finest praise ever given to that picture.' I expressed the same surprise and the same illusion on approaching a glass cabinet, which contained a picture by Rubens, representing his three wives painted as large as life; and as he thus shewed me in succession his most remarkable pictures, I pretended always to receive the impression of reality. He was never tired of renewing my surprise. I allowed him to enjoy it as much as he chose, so that he at last told me, that my instinct was a better judge of his pictures, than the skill of many others, who assumed the character of connoisseurs, and who examined every thing, but felt nothing.

At Valenciennes, a curiosity of another kind was like to have cost me dear. As we had arrived early in this place, I thought I might spend the rest of the evening in walking on the rampart, and taking a view of the fortifications. While I was surveying them, an of-

ficer on guard, at the head of his company, came up, and abruptly asked me what I was doing? 'I am walking,' said I, 'and looking at these fine fortifications.' —'Then you do not know that you are prohibited to walk upon these ramparts, and to examine these works?'—'I certainly did not know this.'—'Where do you come from?'—'From Paris.'—'Who are you?'—'A literary man, who had never seen a fortified place except in books, and was curious to see one in reality.'—'Where do you lodge?'—I named the inn, and the three ladies whom I accompanied; I told also my name. He at last said, 'what you say has the appearance of truth; withdraw.' I gave him no occasion to repeat the order.

As I was relating my adventure to the ladies, we saw the commandant of the place arrive, who proving luckily to have been formerly patronized by Madame de Pompadour, came to pay his respects to the sister-in-law of his benefactress. He appeared to know what had

happened, and told me I was lucky in not having been sent to prison. But he offered to be my guide himself next morning, and to shew me all the outworks of the place. I accepted his offer with gratitude, and had the pleasure of walking round the city at leisure and with safety.

Shortly after our arrival at Paris, we had the affliction of losing Madame Filleul. Never was death more courageous and tranquil. She was a woman of a very singular character, full of wit, and of a wit whose penetration, vivacity, and delicacy, resembled a glance from the eye of the lynx; she had nothing bordering either on stratagem or artifice. I never discovered in her either the follies or vanities of her sex: she had the usual tastes, but plain, natural, and without caprice. Her soul was lively, but peaceful; she had enough of feeling to be affectionate and beneficent, but not enough to be the sport of her passions. Her inclinations were mild, peaceful, and steady; she yielded to them without weakness, and was never enslav-

ed to them; she viewed the things of life and of the world as a game which she was diverted with seeing played, and at which she was occasionally obliged to play herself, 'but without,' as she said, 'being either a knave or a dupe.'* Thus it was that she acted with little attention to her own interest, but more to that of her friends. No event surprized her; and in every situation she had the advantage of coolness and prudence. She it was, I have no doubt, who put Madame de Seran on the road to fortune; but she only smiled at the ingenuity of this young lady, when she heard her say, 'that even in a king, were he king of the world, she would not have a lover whom she did not love.'—'You shall have kings,' said Madame Filleul, 'with whom you may be in love, and a fortune which you will only have to enjoy.'—'Indeed,' said the young

* Probably in allusion to the following excellent lines of Madame Deshoulieres:

On commence par être dupe,
On finit par être fripon.

woman, 'you would all be glad if my power were absolute, that you might only have to ask for whatever you wished; but while you were diverting yourselves here, I should die of ennui above stairs, like Madame de Pompadour.'—'Come, child, let us be poor,' said Madame Filleul; 'were I in your place, I should be as great a fool as yourself; and in the evening we ate gaily our leg of mutton, and laughed at human greatness. Thus, without being affected by the approach of death, she took leave of her friend with a smile, and her departure was only a gentle swoon.

On my return from Aix-la-Chapelle, I found the censure of the Sorbonne fixed on the door of the academy, and on that of Madame Geoffrin. But the Swiss porters of the Louvre seemed to have unanimously agreed in wiping their brooms upon this placard. The censure and the mandate of the archbishop were read in the parish churches throughout Paris, and they were scouted in every

company. Neither the court nor the parliament had interfered in this business: I was only desired to keep quiet; and Belisarius continued to be printed and sold with the royal privilege. But a more afflicting event than the decrees of the Sorbonne was awaiting me at Maisons; and on arriving there, I found all my courage was necessary.

I mentioned a young niece of Madame Gaulard, and the agreeable habit which I had formed of spending the summer with them, and sometimes even the winter. This habit of living together had produced an attachment between the niece and myself. Neither of us was rich; but through the interest of our friend Bouret, nothing was easier than to procure me, either at Paris, or in the country, an appointment which would be sufficient to place us in easy circumstances. We had made no one the confident of our desires and our hopes. But the freedom with which we were left together, the tranquil confidence with which Madame Gaulard her-

self viewed our intimacy, left us no doubt that she would be favourable to our wishes. Bouret, in particular, seemed to take so much pleasure in seeing our good understanding, that I thought myself sure of him. I hoped too to be able to bring back his friend in good health, and then made no doubt of prevailing on him to interest himself in my fortune, and in my marriage.

But Madame Gaulard had a cousin whom she tenderly loved, and whose fortune was made. This cousin, who bore the same relation to the young niece, fell in love with her, asked her in marriage during my absence, and without difficulty obtained her. Being too young, and too timid, to declare another inclination, she engaged herself so far, that I arrived only in time to be present at the marriage. The dispensation from Rome alone was waited for, before going to the altar: and I, in the character of an intimate friend of the family, was to be witness and confident of the whole. My situation was pain-

ful; that of the young lady was almost equally so; and however good an appearance we had resolved to maintain, I can hardly conceive how our sadness was not betrayed to the eyes of the aunt and the future husband. Luckily the freedom of the country allowed us to exchange a few words of consolation, and to inspire each other with the courage which we so much wanted. In such circumstances, hopeless love takes refuge in the arms of friendship; and to this we had recourse. We promised therefore to be at least friends for life; and so long as our two hearts were thus allowed to comfort each other, we were not unhappy. But till the fatal dispensation arrived, it was proper that I should absent myself, and a proper opportunity soon presented itself.

BOOK IX.

M. DE MARIGNY having become reconciled to his wife, shortened his journey to Fontainbleau, and went with her to Menars. He expressed a desire that I should accompany him in this journey; and his wife urged me still more earnestly. Being in the secret of their quarrel, I hoped to be able to confirm their reconciliation; and out of gratitude to him, as well as friendship for her, I agreed to accompany them. He wrote me from Fontainbleau on the 12th of October 1767, 'You cannot believe, sir, what pleasure you afford me by coming to Menars. I might perhaps be a little jealous of that which Madame de Marigny has expressed.'

My presence was not useless during this journey. More than one cloud arose between them, which it was necessary to disperse. Even on the road, M. de Marigny, while praising his wife, wished to impute the faults which she had committed, to the Countess de Seran. But the young lady, who had a great deal of spirit, refused to avail herself of this excuse. 'There has been nothing to blame,' said she, 'in my conduct towards you, and you are accusing me unjustly; but you are still more unjust when you suppose that my friend is to blame.' And when some expressions too rash and full of acrimony escaped him respecting this absent friend, 'Sir,' said his wife, 'you ought to respect her both on your own account, and on mine; and I must say that you will never offend her without wounding my heart.'

The truth is, that in the intimate conversation of these two ladies, Madame de Seran took the greatest care to inspire her friend with mildness, with complais-

ance, and, if possible, with love for a man who, she told her, possessed amiable qualities, and who, if his violence and ill-humour were a little softened, might make a very good husband.

A little energy and pride was necessary with a man, who himself possessing frankness and courage, esteemed a character which resembled his own. We therefore assumed with him a tone of reasoning which was mild, but firm; and I fulfilled so well my office of mediator, that I left them in perfect harmony together. But what I had seen, and, above all, what I had confidentially heard from the young lady, gave me reason to think that this married couple, though they might esteem, would never love each other.

The following spring, I again took a journey with them into Touraine. I had then the pleasure of seeing M. de Marigny fully reconciled to Madame de Seran; except a few moments of jealous irritation on account of the great intima-

cy of the two ladies, he was very agreeable to them. With respect to me, he was so pleased at having me as his mediator, that he offered to present me for life with a pretty country house near Menars. Nothing could be more captivating than its little grove, its garden, its brook of the clearest water, and its delicious retreat upon the banks of the Loire; but this gift was a chain which I would not consent to wear.

On my return I went to Maisons. This retreat had charms for me; I loved all its inhabitants, and had reason to hope that I was beloved. I could not have been more at ease in my own house. When any of my friends wished to see me, he came to Maisons, and was kindly received. The Count de Creutz was the man who took most pleasure and was most liked in the society; because, with the rarest mental endowments, he united simplicity and goodness.

A little grove near Alport was the resting place during our walks. There his

soul laid itself open before me. The sentiments which filled it, the images which the observation and study of nature had engraved on his memory, and of which his imagination formed, as it were, a rich and splendid gallery; the lofty ideas with which meditation had inspired him, and which his mind poured copiously into mine, whether he spoke of politics or morals, of men or of things, of the arts or sciences, kept me for whole hours attentive, and in a manner enchanted. His country and his king, Sweden and Gustavus, the objects of his idolatry, were the two subjects on which he conversed most eloquently, and with the greatest delight. The enthusiasm with which he extolled them took such full possession of my mind and senses, that I would willingly have followed him beyond the Baltic.

One of his most passionate inclinations was the love of music; and beneficence was the soul of all his other virtues. One day he came and besought me, as I

valued our friendship, to extend my aid to a young man, who, he said, was in despair, and on the eve of drowning himself, unless I saved him. 'He is a musician,' continued he, 'with a great deal of talent, and who requires only a pretty opera to make his fortune at Paris. He has just come from Italy; he has made some attempts at Geneva. He came with an opera written upon the subject of one of your tales, (*Les Mariages Samnites*); the directors of the opera have heard and refused it. The poor young man has no resource; I have advanced him a few louis, but I can do no more; and, as a last favour, he begged me to recommend him to you.'

I had hitherto composed nothing which came near the idea I had formed of a French poem suited to the Italian music; I did not even think myself qualified for it; but, in order to please the Count de Creutz, I would have undertaken impossibilities.

I had just then on my table one of Voltaire's tales, (*L'Ingenu*); I thought it might furnish me with the ground-work of a little comic opera. 'I will go,' said I to the Count de Creutz, 'and see if I can introduce it upon the stage, and extract from it sentiments and descriptions which may be favourable to song. Return in eight days, and bring me the young man.'

The half of my poem was written when they arrived. Gretry, transported with joy, went and began his work, while I was finishing mine. The Huron was completely successful; and Gretry, more modest and more grateful than he afterwards was, thinking his reputation not yet sufficiently established, besought me not to abandon him. Then it was that I wrote *Lucile*.

In consequence of the still greater success which this met with, I perceived that the public was disposed to relish a drama of a character suited to that of my tales. Seeing, therefore, that with a musician

and actors, who were capable of answering my intentions, faithful and interesting representations might be formed, I was myself seized with a very keen relish for this kind of creation; for I may say, that by raising the character, I created a new species of comic opera. After *Lucile*, I wrote *Sylvain*; after *Sylvain*, *L'Ami de la Maison*, and *Zemire et Azor*; and our mutual success continued always to increase. No labour ever afforded me purer enjoyment. My favourite actors, Clairval, Caillot, and Madame la Ruette, were the managers of their own theatre. Madame la Ruette invited us to dinner. There I read my poem, and Gretry sung his music. Both being approved in this little council, all due preparations were made for introducing the work upon the stage, and after two or three rehearsals, it was represented.

Our actors were perfectly sincere in their endeavours to perform the opera in the best manner: both in acting and singing they understood what was proper; and they had a presentiment of the

effects still more infallible than ours. For my own part, I never hesitated in paying the greatest deference to their opinion; nay, they sometimes accused me of being too ready to follow it. For instance, in the interval between *Lucile* and *Sylvain*, I had written an opera in three acts, upon that tale of my own which is intitled *The Connoisseur*. I read it to the little committee. Gretry was charmed; Madame la Ruette and Clairval applauded; but Caillot was cold and silent. I took him aside. 'You are not satisfied,' said I, 'speak freely: what is your opinion of what you have just heard?'—'My opinion is,' said he, 'that it is only the *Metromanie** on a small scale; that a satire upon false taste is not lively enough for a theatre like ours, and that this work might fail of success.' I then returned to the fire-place where our company was sitting. 'Madam,' said I, 'and you gentlemen, we are all fools; Caillot alone is in the right;'

* Alluding to the celebrated comedy of that name by Piron.

and I threw the manuscript into the fire. They exclaimed, that Caillot had made me commit a piece of folly. Gretry shed tears of grief; and when he went out with me, appeared in such despair, that I was really sorry for what I had done.

Impatience to relieve him from this condition having hindered me from sleeping, the plan and the first scenes of *Sylvain* were the first fruit of this watching. I was writing in the morning when I saw Gretry come in. 'I have not shut my eyes to-night,' said he.—'No more have I; sit down and listen.' I read him my plan, and two scenes. 'As to this work,' continued I, 'I am perfectly secure; I assure you of its success.' He got hold of the two first airs, and went away quite relieved.

Such was the employment of my leisure; and the produce of this easy labour annually augmented my little fortune. But it was not so considerable as that Madame Gaulard would consider it as a suitable establishment for her niece; she,

therefore, as formerly mentioned, gave her another husband; and this society, which I had so carefully cultivated, was soon broken up. Another event threw me into a new set of acquaintances.

It was natural that the fate of Belisarius should have cooled Madame Geoffrin a little towards me. Being now more of a declared devotee, she felt some uneasiness at lodging in her house an author whom the church had censured. The moment I perceived this, I pretended a desire to be lodged more commodiously. 'I regret much,' said she, 'that I have nothing better to offer you; but I hope that, though you no longer lodge in my house, you will not the less continue to be one of my friends, and to attend the dinners at which they meet.' After taking leave in this manner, I made my preparations for leaving her house; and a lodging to a wish was offered me by the Countess de Séran, in a hotel which the king had given her. This leads me to resume the thread of her story.

On her return from Aix-la-Chapelle, the king had received her better than ever, without being more daring. However the mystery of their private meetings had not escaped the watchful eyes of the court: and the Duke de Choiseul, who was determined to keep at a distance from the king every woman who was not devoted to himself, had indulged in some hasty and satirical observations against her. As soon as she learned this, she was resolved to impose silence upon him. She was intimately acquainted with La Borde, the court banker, a man devoted to the Duke de Choiseul, to whom he owed his fortune. At his house, and in his presence, she had an interview with the minister. 'My lord duke,' said she, 'I have a favour to ask you, but I must first compel you to do me justice. You, I understand, speak very slightingly of me; you believe me to be one of those women who aim at possessing the king's heart, and at acquiring an influence over his mind, which gives you umbrage. I

might have punished you for this language; but I choose rather to undeceive you. The king expressed a desire to see me, which I did not refuse to gratify; we have had private conversations, and have carried on a constant correspondence. You know all this; but the letters of the king will soon inform you of something which you do not know. Read them; you will see an extreme kindness, but as much respect as tenderness, and nothing at which I have cause to blush. I love the king,' continued she, 'as a father; I would give my life for him; but, king as he is, he will never prevail upon me to deceive him, and to lower myself by granting what my heart neither will nor can bestow.'

The Duke de Choiseul, after reading the letters which she had given him, was about to throw himself at her feet. 'Forgive me, madam,' said he; I own myself guilty of having trusted too much to appearances. The king is indeed in the right, you are but too admirable

Now tell me what you ask, and what service can be rendered you by the new friend whom you have attached for life.' 'I am just about,' said she, 'to marry my sister to a respectable officer in the army. Neither my relations nor myself are able to give her a marriage portion.' 'Well, madam,' said he, 'the king must undertake to provide for the marriage of your sister; and I will procure for her an order on the treasury for two hundred thousand livres.'* 'No, my lord duke, no; neither my sister nor I wish money for which we neither have done, nor will do any thing. What we ask is an appointment which is due to the services of M. de la Barthe; and the only favour we solicit for him, is to obtain it in preference to other military men, who might have an equal claim to it.' This favour was easily granted. But all that the king could prevail upon her to accept for her own use, was a present of the little hotel in which she offered to accommodate me.

* About £9000.

Just as I was going to settle there, I found myself under the necessity of preferring another; and this necessity was produced by the following cause.

My old friend Mademoiselle Clairon having left the theatre, and taken a pretty large house near the Pont-Royal, was desirous of having me for an inmate. She knew me to be engaged with Madame de Seran; but knowing that lady to be kind and feeling, she went and called upon her without my knowledge. She related, with her theatrical eloquence, the indignity she had suffered from the gentlemen of the bed-chamber, and the brutal ingratitude which she had experienced from the public, in return for her services and her talents. In this solitary retreat, her sweetest consolation would have been the company of her old friend. She could let me a commodious apartment, and was very sure I should accept it, if not engaged to occupy that which the countess had kindly offered me. She begged her to be so generous as to break

this engagement herself, and to insist upon my going to lodge with her. 'You are surrounded, madam,' said she, 'with every kind of happiness; while I have none remaining but that which I can derive from the constant and intimate society of a real friend. Do not in pity deprive me of this.'

Madame de Seran was affected by her prayer. She suspected me of having given my consent. I assured her of the contrary. In fact, the lodging she was fitting up for me would have been more agreeable. I should have been more at liberty, and only a few steps from the academy. This last circumstance alone would have been of inestimable value to me in bad weather, during which I should have the Pont-Royal to cross if I lodged with Mademoiselle Clairon. I had therefore no difficulty in convincing Madame de Seran, that in every respect this was a sacrifice, which I was called upon to make. 'Well,' said she, 'you must make

it; Mademoiselle Clairon has a right to you, which I have not.'

I went therefore to lodge with my old friend, but perceived from the first day that, with the exception of a little room behind my apartment, it was not habitable for a studious man, on account of the infernal noise of carriages and waggons mounting the bridge, which was close at my ear. Most of the stone and wood which is brought into Paris passes this way. Day and night, therefore, without ceasing, the steep pavement resounded under the wheels of these waggons, and under the feet of the wretched horses which laboriously dragged them up, while the tremendous cries of the waggoners, and the still more piercing sound of their whips, realized to me what Virgil says of Tartarus,

Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et sæva sonare,
Verbera; tum stridor ferri, tractæque catenæ.

But however afflicting this inconvenience was, I said nothing of it to my dear

neighbour; and every possible compensation was afforded by the pleasures of the most agreeable and best selected society which I enjoyed, during the whole time that she and I dwelt in this house.

She often visited the duchess of Villeroy, the Duke d'Aumont's daughter, who, at the time her father was persecuting me, had often expressed strongly to me her regret at his injustice, though she could not prevail upon him to mitigate his severity. One evening, when she had just quitted my neighbour, I was surprised when the latter began to say, 'Well, Marmontel, you would never name the author of the parody of Cinna; I have at last found it out;' and she named Cury. (Cury, his mother, and his son, were by that time dead.) 'And who told you so?' inquired I, with surprise.—'A person who knows it well, the duchess of Villeroy. She has just gone out, and her visit was on your account. Her father wishes to see you.'—Me! her father! the Duke d'Aumont!'—'He wishes to

consult with you about the entertainments which he is desired to give the court on occasion of the dauphin's marriage. But my father,' said she, 'would wish Marmontel not to speak to him of what has passed.'—'Certainly,' replied I, 'Marmontel will say nothing: but, madam, has he no regret to express to Marmontel on account of having treated him with such cruel injustice, for I can assure you that he really did so.'—'I know it well,' said she; 'and my father himself is perfectly sensible of it. The parody of Cinna was by Cury; La Ferté, who heard him read it, told us so; but so long as the poor man lived, he would not betray him.'

I was obliged to admit what La Ferté had said; and being curious to see the behaviour of a man condemned by his own conscience, I agreed to the interview, and went to his house.

I found him with this very La Ferté, the intendant of the *menus-plaisirs*, examining on a table the plan of an artifi-

rial fire-work. As soon as he saw me come in, he dismissed La Ferté, and concealing his agitation under an appearance of vivacity, he led me into his room. There, with a trembling hand, he drew a chair, and with a hurried look invited me to sit down. The duchess of Villeroy had told Mademoiselle Clairon that her father was embarrassed about entertainments for the court. This expression came into my mind, and, in order to begin the conversation, I said, 'Well, my lord duke, so you are very much embarrassed—' At this introduction I saw him turn pale, but luckily I added, 'about your court entertainments.' He then recovered from the shock given him by my equivocal expression. 'Yes,' said he, 'very much embarrassed; and I should be obliged to you, if you would assist in relieving me.' He talked a great deal of the difficulties of such a charge; we looked over the theatrical repositories; he appeared to relish my advice; and at length asked me if I had not any new

work in my own port-folio. He had heard *Zemire et Azor* talked of; he begged me to read it, which I agreed to do, but only in his own presence. This gave occasion to a second private interview; but as his erudition extended to the Fairy tales, he discovered my subject to be the same with Beauty and the Beast. 'It is impossible,' said he, 'to give this drama at the dauphin's marriage; it would be thought I meant to apply it to him.' The application was of his own making, and I kept the secret. It is remarkable, that in neither of our conversations, had this weak and vain man the magnanimity to express regret at the injustice he had done me, and a desire at least of finding some opportunity of repairing it.

At this time, the prince royal of Sweden made a journey to Paris; he had already conceived a very warm affection for the author of Belisarius, and had been so good as enter into a correspondence with me. He expressed a desire to

see me often, and in private. I paid my court to him; and when he learnt the death of his royal father, I was the only stranger whom he admitted to see him in the first moments of his grief. In him I really saw the singular instance of a young man who was wise enough to feel sincere and deep affliction at becoming a king. 'What a misfortune,' said he, 'at my age, to be loaded with a crown, and an immense duty which I am incapable of fulfilling. I was travelling to acquire the knowledge of which I stood in need; and now I am interrupted in my travels, obliged to return without having had time to acquire information, to see, and to know men, with whom henceforth I can no longer hold any intimate society, any steady or faithful intercourse. I must bid an eternal adieu to friendship and truth.'—'No, sire,' said I; 'truth shuns only those kings who repel and will not listen to her. Since you love her, she will follow you; the sensibility of your heart, the frankness of your character, render

you worthy of having friends, and they will be found.'—'Men,' replied he, 'have few friends; kings have none.'—'There is one,' said I, pointing to the Count de Creutz, who was reading some dispatches in a corner; 'there is one who will never fail.'—'Yes,' said he, 'he is one upon whom I depend; but he will not be with me; my affairs oblige me to leave him here.'

This little dialogue may give an idea of my conversations with this young prince, with whom I was more delighted every day. After having heard a few readings of the Incas, he desired his minister to ask me for a manuscript copy; and afterwards, when the work was printed, he allowed me to dedicate it to him.

The same year, I took a journey to Croix-Fontaine, which was very agreeable at the time, but which, in the end, proved very unfortunate. There raged in this quarter, all along the Seine, a putrid and very dangerously malignant fever.

Many persons had died at Saint-Port and at Saint-Assise; and it had attacked a great many of the domestics at Croix-Fontaine. Those who were not affected attended their companions; mine did not spare himself, and I myself went pretty often to visit the sick, an act of humanity which was at least perfectly useless. Yet I thought myself still in perfect health, when I received a letter from Paris, desiring me to come to a meeting of the academy, which was to be held for the reception of the archbishop of Toulouse, and which the king of Sweden meant to honour with his presence.

The day after my arrival at Paris, I felt as if I had received a blow on the head. Yet I attended the meeting of the academy: I even read some passages from my work of the *Incas;* but my voice was weak, faint, and devoid of expression. I met with success, but my languor was observed with anxiety. In the evening the fever attacked me. My servant was struck at the same time;

and both of us were forty days suspended between life and death. This was the first illness of which Bouvard cured me. He paid me all the attentions of a tender friend. And Mademoiselle Clairon, during my recovery, treated me with the most affecting attention; she was my reader; the reveries of the Arabian Nights were the only study of which my weak brain was capable.

Shortly after, the academy lost Duclos; and at his death, the place of historiographer of France was given to me without any solicitation. The manner in which I received this favour was as follows.

Whilst I continued to lodge with Madame Geoffrin, Garville, an acquaintance of Mademoiselle Clairon, with whose frank and honourable character I was well acquainted, called upon me, and said, 'During the journeys which I took into Brittany, at the time the Duke d'Aiguillon commanded there, I saw and had occasion to know him. I am certainly assured that the action which is raised

against him is a mere party business; but however good his cause is, the interest of the states and parliament of Brittany makes it impossible for him to find an advocate at Paris; the only one who has dared to undertake his defence is a poor young man, with no money, whose capacity is not yet mature, but who is trying his fortune. His name is Linguet. He has composed a memorial, with which the duke is very much dissatisfied. It is a piece of empty declamation, a shapeless mass of ridiculous metaphors, and there is no possibility of publishing such an awkward composition. The duke talked to me of his distress. I advised him to have recourse to some man of letters.'— "Men of letters," said he, "are all prepossessed against me; they are my enemies."—'I replied to him, that I knew one who was the enemy only of injustice and falsehood; and I named you. He embraced me, saying, that I would do him the greatest service if I could prevail upon you to undertake his memoir. I

come from him to beg, to beseech, that you will do him this service.'—'Sir,' replied I to Garville, 'my pen will never decline the defence of a good cause. If that of the Duke d'Aiguillon be such as you describe it, you may depend upon me. Let him send me his papers. After reading them, I will say more positively what I can do. But tell him, that the zeal which I will employ in defending him, would be equally employed in defending the meanest of the populace, who, in such circumstances, should have recourse to me; and to the acquittal of this duty, I attach two conditions: one, that secrecy shall be observed; the other, that there shall be no thanks, no gratitude between us; I do not wish even to see him.'

Garville gave him a faithful report of this answer; and next day he brought me the memorial with the papers. In these papers, it did really appear to me that the action which was raised against him was a mere persecution excited by personal animosity. Finding that the

memorial too, quite answered Garville's description, I moulded it anew. I preserved all that was tolerably well, only arranging it with more order and clearness. I rooted out the incoherent metaphors with which the style was loaded, and I substituted natural and simple expressions instead of this extravagant language. These little corrections alone produced a happy change; for it was chiefly in point of style that this memorial was absurd and ridiculous. However, I added a few passages of my own, such as the introduction, for Linguet had in his indulged an impertinent degree of arrogance; and the conclusion, in which he had neglected to bring into one view the strength of his proof and his arguments.

When the Duke d'Aiguillon saw what I had done, he was very well satisfied. He sent for Linguet, and said, 'I have read your memorial, and have made a few alterations, which I beg you will adopt.' Linguet read, and then said, foaming with rage, 'No, my lord duke,

no; it is not you; it is a man of the profession whose hand has been at this work. You have done me a mortal injury; you are attempting to dishonour me. But I am no man's scholar; no man has a right to correct me. I will sign only my own work, which this no longer is. Find out an advocate who will undertake your cause, for I will not.' And he was just going, but the Duke d'Aiguillon desired him to stay. He saw himself at his mercy; for no other advocate would sign his memorial. He therefore allowed him to manage this as he thought fit. All the pages which I had written were expunged. Linguet himself wrote anew the introduction and conclusion; but he allowed my arrangement of all the rest to remain: he did not again introduce any of those absurdities which I had effaced from his style, so that he availed himself of my labour, even while he rejected it. However he never rested till he had discovered who it was that had corrected his memorial; and on learning it, he be-

same, for I know not what reason, my most cruel enemy. A journal, which he afterwards wrote, was deluged with the venom of rage which he poured out at the very mention of my name.

The Duke d'Aiguillon, in spite of his advocate, was extremely sensible of the improvement I had made in his memorial; and he urged Garville to bring me to his house, that he might at least, as he said, have the satisfaction of thanking me in person. After having long declined his invitations, I at last yielded, and went once to dine with him. From that time I had not seen him till I received the following note in his own hand: 'Sir, I have just asked the king to give you the place of historiographer of France, which is vacant by the death of M. Duclos. His majesty has granted it; and I lose no time in giving you the information. Come and thank the king.'

This mark of favour, the cause of which was unknown, imposed silence on my enemies at court; and the Duke de-

Duras, not being so scrupulous as the Duke d'Aumout about Beauty and the Beast, asked, in 1771, *Zemire et Azor*, for the entertainment at Fontainebleau. It met with unhoped-for success, but not without running the risk of being hissed. *L'Ami de la Maison*, which was presented the same year upon this stage, met with a very cold reception. As soon as I understood the reason, I applied the proper remedy; and at Paris it met with the same success as *Zemire et Azor*. These are very little things; but as they interested me, they will also have some degree of interest for my children.

When *Zemire et Azor* was announced at Fontainebleau, a report was spread that it was the story of Beauty and the Beast brought upon the stage, and that the principal character would creep on all fours. But I very quietly allowed them to say what they pleased. I had given very particular directions about the machinery and dresses; and made no doubt of my intentions having been fulfilled.

Neither the tailor nor machinist, however, had taken the trouble to read my directions; but had made their arrangements according to the tale of Beauty and the Beast.

My friends were anxious about the success of my work; Gretry looked dejected; Clairval himself, who had acted so heartily in all my other characters, expressed repugnance to appear in this. I asked him the reason? 'How can you expect,' said he, 'that I can give any interest to a character in which I should be hideous?'—'Hideous!' said I, 'you will not be at all hideous. The first glance of you will be frightful; but this ugliness will be united with dignity and grace.'—'Only look then,' said he, 'at the beast's dress which is preparing, for I am told it is shocking.' This was the evening before the representation, so that there was not a moment to lose. I asked them to shew me Azor's dress; it was with great difficulty I prevailed upon the tailor to be so complaisant. He bid me be quite easy,

and trust to him. But I insisted; and the Duke de Duras, after ordering him to take me to the warehouse, was so good as to accompany me. 'Well,' said the tailor disdainfully to his servants, 'shew the gentleman the beast's dress.' What did I see! a pantaloon just like the skin of a monkey with a long bare tail, a naked back, enormous claws for each of the four hoofs, two long horns in the head, and the most hideous mask, with boar's teeth. I shrieked with horror, and declared that my piece should not be acted under this ridiculous and monstrous disguise. 'Then what would you have had?' asked the tailor proudly.—'I would have wished you,' replied I, 'to read my directions, and you would have seen that I asked a dress for a man, not for a monkey.'—'A man's dress for a beast!'—'And who told you that Azor was a beast?'—'The tale tells me so.'—'The tale is not my work; and my work shall not be acted till all this be changed.'—'It is too late.'—'Then I will go and

[redacted]k the king's permission not to shock [redacted] with this hideous spectacle; and I [redacted]ell him the reason.' Our man then [redacted]ited, and asked what was to be done? 'The simplest thing in the world,' replied I; 'tiger-coloured pantaloons, shoes and gloves of the same, a doliman of purple satin, black hair waving, and picturesquely disposed, an ugly, but not deformed mask, nor at all resembling a snout.' It was with great difficulty that all this was found, for the warehouse was empty; but, by dint of obstinacy, I forced them to obey me; and I formed the mask myself, by putting together detached pieces cut out of different masks.

Next morning I made Clairval try this dress; and when he saw himself in the mirror, it appeared to him dignified and commanding. '' Now, my friend,' said I, 'your success depends on the manner in which you shall enter upon the theatre. If you appear confused, timid, embarrassed, we are undone; but if you enter proudly, with a firm step, and shewing

yourself fully, you will command the au-
dience; and after the first moment
over, I will answer for the rest.'

I had been served by the machinist in
the same negligent manner, as by my im-
pertinent tailor; and the magic picture,
the most interesting moment of the piece,
would have failed, if I had not found a
remedy for his awkwardness. With two
ells of silver mohair to imitate a pier
looking-glass, and two ells of clear and
transparent gauze, I taught him to pro-
duce one of the most agreeable theatrical
deceptions.

By these attentions, I obtained the
most brilliant success. Clairval acted his
character to a wish. His proud and
daring entrance produced only the suit-
able impression of astonishment: and
from that time I felt no farther apprehen-
sion. I was in a corner of the orchestra,
and behind me was a seat full of court
ladies. When Azor on his knees, at the
feet of Zemire, sung to her,

Du moment qu'on aime,
L'on devient si doux,
Et je suis moi-même
*Plus tremblant que vous.**

heard these ladies say to each other, *e is not ugly now;*' and immediately ér, '*he is handsome.*'

I must not deny that the charm of music had a wonderful influence in producing these effects. That of Gretry was then what it very seldom was after my time; and he was not sufficiently sensible of the care which I took in marking out the character, and the design of an easy and agreeable song. In general, the folly of musicians consists in thinking that they owe nothing to their poet; and Gretry, with all his talents, had this folly in the most sovereign degree.

As for *L'Ami de la Maison,* my complaisance for Madame la Ruette, my heroine, was the cause of the little success

* The moment one loves, one becomes so mild; I myself tremble more than you.

which this work met with at court. [illegible] original plan was to give the charac[illegible] *L'Ami de la Maison* to Caillot, for [illegible] indeed I had written it, and who[illegible] certain, would have acted it in a super[illegible] manner; but he declined it for a singu[illegible] reason. 'The situation,' said he, 'is to[illegible] like that which we sometimes get int[illegible] and the character also is too like that which is imputed to us. Were I to act *L'Ami de la Maison*, according to your intention and my own feeling, no mother would ever after leave me with her daughter.'—'What,' said I, 'would you not act Tartuffe?'—'Tartuffe,' said he, 'does not come so close to us; no one is afraid of our being Tartuffes.' Nothing could overcome his repugnance for the character, 'which,' he said, 'would injure him the more the better he played it.' However, I had observed that La Ruette had a desire for it, and I perceived that his wife thought that, next to Caillot, I could give it to no other; Gretry thought the same, so that I yielded,

but repented the moment I saw the first hearsal. This character required youth, liveliness, a clear and animated voice, and delicacy in acting. Honest La Ruette, with his oldish figure, his trembling and broken voice, was quite out of place. He made it dull and dismal; not feeling at his ease, he did not even give way to his natural animation; he produced a failure in every scene.

Madame la Ruette too, being a little of a prude, imagined that the satirical penetration which I had thrown into the character of Agatha, was not becoming in so young a person. She had thought it incumbent on her to blunt the point of this pleasantry; and had substituted a severe and reserved air, which took away all that was agreeable in the character.

Thus my whole work had been rendered unnatural. Luckily La Ruette was himself sensible that the character of Cleon suited neither his acting nor his singing; and I found on the same theatre

an actor of the name of Julian, who was less difficult than Caillot, and younger than La Ruette, whose voice was brilliant, his action lively, and his figure brisk. Gretry and I applied ourselves to teach him his part, and he learned to sing and act it very well.

Madame la Ruette had little inclination to listen to what I had to say; however, I said: 'Madam, we should become cold if we attempted to be too wise; be so good as give a natural representation of Agatha's character. Her innocence is not that of Agnes, but still it is innocence; and as she employs her malicious penetration only in playing upon the scoundrel who is attempting to seduce her, be assured it will be approved of.' Her character met with the greatest success; and the piece, being again called for at Versailles in 1772, appeared so altered that it was not known. Yet I had made no alteration whatever.

It was not till three years after that I gave *La Fausse Magie;* and though the

success was not at first so brilliant as that of the two others, it has been no less durable. For more than twenty years past it has frequently appeared on the stage, and yet the public has never tired. It is true, indeed, that these little works have lost a good deal of their lustre and grace, by losing the actors for whom I had composed them.

In the same year, (1772), I had a prospect of success at court, of another kind, which I felt much more sensibly; it was the influence which my poem to the king upon the burning of the Hotel-Dieu produced, or seemed to produce. The gratification of my vanity was nothing; but the strong and deep impression which it had made promised, I was told, to improve the lot of those unfortunate persons whose groans and lamentations I had brought to the royal ear; and for the first time in my life, I hoped to see myself the benefactor of humanity. I was proud; I would have given my life, that the event

had crowned my efforts; but I did not enjoy that happiness.

The ode in praise of Voltaire is nearly of the same date. It was written on the following occasion. The society of Mademoiselle Clairon was more numerous and more brilliant than ever. The conversation was lively, particularly on the subject of poetry; and a man of letters could there exchange his ideas with men of the world who possessed exquisite taste and highly cultivated understandings. In one of these conversations, I said, talking of lyric poets, 'that the ode could not, among us, possess that character of truth and dignity which it had possessed in Greece: for this reason, that poets had no longer the same ministry to fulfil; that the bards alone among the Gauls had borne this high character, because they, by their profession, were bound to celebrate the glory of heroes.'

'And what,' said they, 'should hinder the poet of the present day from assuming this ancient character, and devoting

himself to this public ministry?' I replied, that 'if there were, as formerly, feasts and public solemnities in which the poet was listened to, the pomp of these great spectacles would exalt his soul and his genius.' As an instance, I supposed the apotheosis of Voltaire, and Mademoiselle Clairon, upon a large stage, standing at the foot of his statue, and reciting a poem in praise of that illustrious man. 'Do you think,' said I, 'that in the ode destined for this solemn occasion, the mind and soul of the poet would not assume a tone of higher truth and animation, than in one which he coolly composes in his closet?' I saw that this idea made a strong impression, and Mademoiselle Clairon in particular appeared deeply affected. This suggested to me the design of composing, by way of essay, that ode which you will find in the collection of my poetry.

Mademoiselle Clairon, while reading it, felt that her art could supply what was wanting in mine, and willingly agreed to

lend to my verses the charm of that illusion which she was so well able to spread over them.

One evening, when the company were assembled in her drawing room, a message was sent desiring them to wait for her. Then while we are talking of Voltaire, a curtain is suddenly raised, and Mademoiselle Clairon appears, standing by the bust of that great man, and dressed as a priestess of Apollo, with a crown of laurel in her hand. She then begins to recite this ode with the look of inspiration and the tone of enthusiasm. This little solemnity had afterwards the merit of giving rise to a more pompous one, of which Voltaire was witness.

Shortly after, the Count de Valbelle, Mademoiselle Clairon's lover, having succeeded to an estate by the death of his eldest brother, and gone to enjoy his fortune in the city of Aix in Provence; and the prince of Anspach having been seized with a passion for our theatrical princess, she was obliged to take a larger and more

commodious house than that in which we lodged together. Then it was that I went to the house of the Countess de Seran, and occupied the apartments which she had reserved for me, and where M. Oude came and spent a year with me.

I should have wished to retire with him to Bort; and had in view a small property very near the village, where I would have got a cottage built for myself. Luckily the price was raised so high, as to be beyond my resources, and I was under the necessity of renouncing my scheme. I therefore allowed myself still to be carried along by the society of Paris, and particularly by that of women, though determined to shun every connection which would disturb my repose.

I paid my court to the Countess de Seran as constantly as possible, without being troublesome to her. She was so kind as to invite me to spend the spring with her in Normandy, in her little chateau of La Tour, which she was embellishing. I accompanied her. What would I not

have quitted for her? With her, I experienced every charm which can be found in the friendship and most intimate society of a woman, without love. Certainly, had it been possible to be in love without hope, it would have been with Madame de Seran; but she marked out so skilfully the boundary within which my sentiments for her, and hers for me, were to be confined, that not even my wishes ever went beyond it.

I had formed also a connection of pure friendship with women, who, in the decline of their age, still continued agreeable, and of whom Fontenelle would have said, '*you see well that love has been there.*' I did not feel that veneration which is reserved for virtue alone; but they inspired me with a sentiment of benevolence which attached me almost as much, and which was more flattering to them. I was affected to see the sadness of declining beauty, as it stood before the glass where its charms could no longer be discovered. Of all my female friends, none were so much afflicted at this irreparable

loss as Madame de L. P. Her melancholy reminded me of the following words of a celebrated Grecian beauty, as she suspended her mirror in the temple of her divinity:

Je le donne a Venus puis qu'elle est toujours belle;
Il redouble trop mes ennuis.
Je ne sourais me voir dans ce miroir fidelle,
*Ni telle que je fus, ni telle que je suis.**

No heart could be more feeling, more delicate, more affectionate, than that of Madame de L. P. Though I could not pretend to make her any compensation for that of which years had deprived her, I endeavoured to console her by all the

* I give it to Venus since she is always beautiful; it irritates my chagrin too much. I cannot view myself in this faithful mirror, either such as I was, or such as I am.

Thus versified by Prior.

Venus, take my votive glass,
Since I am not what I was,
What from this time I shall be,
Venus, let me never see.

attentions of a rational and tender friend; and like an obedient patient, she accepted all the consolations which my reason presented. She had even previously adopted my advice, by attempting to divert her sorrows with study, which formed the charm of our leisure hours.

During the early lustre of her beauty, no one had suspected her of possessing so much understanding as nature had really bestowed upon her. She did not know it herself. Quite occupied with her other charms, and thinking only of pleasure, her indolence and effeminacy left, slumbering as it were in the bottom of her mind, a multitude of just and delicate perceptions, which, if I may so speak, were lodged there without her knowledge, but which, when the dismal leisure to which she was now left forced her to attend to them, seemed to unfold themselves spontaneously. In our conversations I saw these ideas spring up and disclose themselves with much grace and facility. Out of complaisance, she followed my studies and employments;

she assisted me in my researches; but while her mind was occupied, her heart was empty, and this was her torment. All her sensibility was directed towards our mutual friendship; which, being confined within the limits prescribed by her age and mine, became on that account only the more ardent. Whether at Paris, or in the country, I was as constant as possible in my attendance upon her. Frequently even I quitted on her account companies in which I should have found greater pleasure, and did for friendship what I had very seldom done for love. But no person in the world loved me so much as Madame de L. P.; and when I had said, 'Every one else can endure my absence without regret,' I no longer hesitated to sacrifice every thing for her. My literary and philosophical societies alone inspired her with no jealousy, but every other amusement afflicted her; and the reproach was the more sensible, that it was cautious, timid, and mild.

At this time my employments were

divided between history and the Encyclopedie. I had made it a point of honour and delicacy to fulfil well my functions of historiographer, by carefully compiling memoirs for future historians. I applied to the most considerable characters of the time, with the view of drawing from their papers information respecting the reign of Lewis XV, with which I intended to begin; and I was really astonished at the degree of confidence which they shewed. The Count de Maillebois gave me all his own papers, and those of his father. The Marquis de Castries threw open his cabinet, which contained the memoirs of the Marshal de Belle-Isle; the Count de Broglio initiated me into the mysteries of his secret negociations; the Marshal de Contades drew with his own hand the plan of his campaign, and of the disaster of Minden. I stood in need of the confidence of the Marshal de Richelieu; but, like all the literary men in the academy, I was in disgrace with him. Chance brought about a reconciliation; and this too is one of

the occasions in which I was met half way by a favourable opportunity.

'A lady, who was a particular friend of Marshal Richelieu, meeting me at a house in the country, said, 'It was very strange that a man of Richelieu's importance should experience disagreeable and disgusting treatment from the French academy.'—'Certainly,' said I, 'madam, nothing can be more strange; but who is the cause?' She named D'Alembert; 'who,' she said, 'had taken a dislike to the marshal.' I replied, that 'the enemy of the marshal in the academy was not D'Alembert, but he who sought to sour him against D'Alembert, and against all literary men.'

'Do you know, madam,' continued I, 'what sort of men those are who embitter against the academy a man whose personal qualities should make him honoured and beloved? They are academicians, who are enraged against the body to which they belong, on account of the little consideration which they

themselves enjoy. There is the advocate-general Seguier, the public accuser of men of letters to the parliament; there is Paulmi, and some other intruders, who, displeased with a body where they find themselves out of place, would wish, by joining with our enemy Seguier, to compose a formidable party. Such are the men who attempt to alienate from us the mind of the marshal, with the view of having him at their head, and injuring us by his credit. How glorious is it for him to become subservient to their pitiful vanity and hatred! You see what is the consequence. He prevails upon the king to refuse his approbation to the election of two men of irreproachable character. The academy remonstrates against this refusal; and the king being undeceived, agrees that these two men should be elected to the two first places which shall become vacant. This is what really may be called fighting against the air. No, madam, the true party for a Richelieu in the academy, the only party

worthy of my lord marshal, is the party of men of letters.'

She thought me in the right; and some days after, the marshal having come to the same country house, his friend wished me to talk with him. I repeated nearly the same things, though in milder language; and with regard to D'Alembert, I said, 'My lord marshal, D'Alembert believes you the enemy of men of letters, and the friend of their accuser Seguier; this is the reason why he does not love you. But D'Alembert is a good man, and the sentiment of hatred never took root in his heart. He has wedded the academy. Love his wife in the same way that you love so many others, and come sometimes to see her; he will be pleased, and will give you a good reception, as so many other husbands do.'

The marshal was pleased with what I said; and when two other academicians were to be elected, instead of the Abbé Delille and Suard, who had been rejected

by the king, I was invited to dine with him on the day of the election. At this dinner I met with Seguier, Paulmi, and Bissy, the bishop of Senlis. Their party was not numerous; and though they should have had some clandestine votes, ours was combined and united together in such a manner as to be sure of prevailing. I took no notice, therefore, as if I supposed us to be assembled about academical elections; but as if it had been a dinner of gaiety and pleasure, as soon as the soup appeared, I introduced those subjects which were most agreeable to the marshal. I led him to talk of the old style of gallantry, of the pretty women of his time, of the manners of the regency, in short, of the theatre, and, above all, the actresses; so that dinner was over before a single word was said of the academy. It was not till we were leaving table, that the bishop of Senlis, taking me aside, asked whom we intended to choose? I frankly replied, that I believed all votes united in favour

of Brequigny and Beauzee. The marshal, who had come up to us, inquired about the literary merit of these gentlemen; and after having heard me, he said, 'Well, they seem both worthy men; we must join in their favour.'—'Since such is your intention,' said I, 'my lord marshal, will you allow me to go and give the information to the academy. These are words of peace, to which that assembly will listen with pleasure.'—'Go,' said he, 'and take one of my carriages which are in the court; we will not be long in following.'

'My friends,' said I to D'Alembert, 'they are coming to join with us: the marshal, with a good grace, makes the first advances; with a good grace we must receive him accordingly.' He was in fact well received; the election was unanimous; and from that day to his death, he treated me with the greatest kindness. His portfolios therefore were at my disposal.

At the same time, the original manu-

script of the memoirs of Saint-Simon, which I had been allowed to take out of the office for foreign affairs, and from which I made copious extracts, supplied me with information respecting the affairs of the regency. But the making these extracts, and the searching the dispatches and memorials with which I was abundantly supplied, would have been soon equally tiresome and fatiguing to me, had I not in the interval possessed some literary occupation, which was less laborious, and more suited to my taste. The scheme of a supplement to the Encyclopedie, in four volumes folio, supplied me with this relaxation.

You must know, that after the publication of the seventh volume of the Encyclopedie, the continuation had been interrupted by a decree of parliament; and nothing had been done, except secretly, by a small number of writers, of whom I was not one. A laborious compiler, the Chevalier de Jaucourt, had undertaken the literary part, and had performed it in

his own way, which was very different from mine. When, therefore, by dint of constant solicitation, permission was obtained to publish the whole work, and when the plan of a supplement had been formed, Robinet, one of those concerned, called on me, and proposed that I should resume my labour, where I had left it off. 'You began,' said he, 'only at the third volume; you left off at the seventh; all the rest is by another hand. *Pendent opera interrupta.* We come to beg you will complete your work.'

Being busy with history, I answered that it was impossible to engage in another employment. 'At least,' said he, 'allow us to announce that you will give a few articles in the supplement.'—'I will do it,' said I, 'if I have time; I can promise no more.' Soon after he returned to the charge, and with him Panckoucke the bookseller. They told me, that in order to make the necessary arrangements for their enterprize, it was necessary to know how the work would be divided among the different men of letters, and

that they came to know what I wished for my share. 'What can I ask,' said I, 'since I promise nothing?'—'You will do whatever you please,' said Panckoucke; 'only promise to give us a few articles, and allow us to insert this promise in our prospectus: for this we will give you four thousand livres,* and a copy of the supplement.' They were pretty sure that I would make a point of justifying their confidence. I justified it so fully, that they afterwards acknowledged I had exceeded their expectation. But let us resume the thread of the events of my life, which was varied by a thousand accidents.

The death of the king had produced a considerable change at court, in the ministry, and particularly in the fortune of my friends.

M. Bouret had ruined himself with building and embellishing, for the king's use, the pavilion of Croix-Fontaine; and the king thought him sufficiently rewarded by being honoured, once a year, with his presence at a hunting party; an hon-

* About 160 guineas.

our too, which cost the unhappy man dear, being obliged, on that day, to give the whole party a dinner, in which nothing was spared. I had more than once lamented his profusion; but the most liberal, the most improvident of men, would never listen to the advice of his real friends upon the subject of expence. Meanwhile he had completed the destruction of his credit, by building, at great expence, five or six houses upon the Elysian fields, when the king died, without having so much as thought of saving him from ruin; and this event, leaving him drowned in debt, destitute alike of resource and hope, he formed, I believe, the resolution of putting an end to his life. He was found dead in his bed. He was, to his own cost, in the highest degree imprudent; but he never was guilty of any thing dishonourable.

Madame de Seran was more prudent. As, after the king's death, she had no prospect of favour and protection, she made a substantial use of the only benefit of which she had accepted, and sold her

house at a suitable price to the Count d'Angliver, the new director of buildings. Both of us were thus dislodged in 1776, three years after she had admitted me to this happy residence under her roof.

The accession of the new king to the throne, was followed by his coronation in the cathedral at Rheims. As historiographer of France, I was enjoined to be present at this august ceremony. I shall not repeat here what I said in a letter, printed without my knowledge, and which I have since inserted in the collection of my works. It is a feeble representation of the effect produced by this grand spectacle, upon fifty thousand spectators whom I saw assembled. With regard to myself, I never was so much affected by any thing.

In other respects, I enjoyed, during this journey, every accommodation which my place could procure; and for this, I had reason to think myself indebted to the honourable manner in which the Marshal Beauveau, captain of the guards

on duty, and joint member of the French academy, was so kind as to treat me.

Of all the women whom I ever knew, the lady of Marshal Beauveau is the one whose politeness is most natural and charming. She, as well as her husband, paid a delicate and marked attention to set the example to others, of the courteous manner in which they wished me to be treated; and this example was followed. I was sensible of their kindness, which I have since carefully cultivated. The character of the marshal was not so engaging as that of his wife. Nevertheless, the cold dignity with which he was reproached, never put me to a moment's constraint with him. I was convinced that, however different his rank might have been, his air and manner would have been the same; and reconciling myself to what seemed in him to be nature, I found him honourable and worthy, and even disposed to do a service without ostentation. With regard to his wife, who is now his widow, I do not believe that

there is under heaven a more amiable or more accomplished character. She may truly, and without irony, be called the woman who is always in the right. But the correctness and unalterable clearness of her understanding is accompanied with so much mildness, simplicity, modesty, and grace, that we cannot but love the very superiority she enjoys over us. She seems to communicate to us her understanding, to associate our ideas with hers, and to enable us to share the advantage which she always enjoys, of thinking so justly and so well. Her great art, and the object of her most constant attention, was to make her husband be honoured and respected, to withdraw herself in order to put him in her place, and to resign in his favour the interest and consideration of which she was the object. According to her, every thing which was praised in herself ought to be referred to M. de Beauveau. Observe, my children, that she lost nothing by this; that she was only the more respected, and that

this borrowed lustre which she threw over her husband's character, only rendered her own more brilliant and conspicuous. No one ever felt more fully the dignity of her conjugal duties, or fulfilled them in a nobler manner.

'My letter upon the ceremony of the coronation, being published, and distributed at court by the intendant of Champagne, had produced the effect of recalling to the eyes of the king and queen a day of glory and happiness. This made them begin to view me with kindness. The queen shortly after expressed some favour for me. In a small theatre, fitted up in her own palace, she was so good as desire *Sylvain* and *L'Ami de la Maison* to be acted. This little entertainment gave a sensible pleasure; and the queen, as she passed by me, said, with the most agreeable air, 'Marmontel, that is delightful.' But these promises of favour were soon to be disappointed, in consequence of what happened in a musical dispute.

Under the deceased king, the Count de Caraccioli, ambassador from Naples, had persuaded the court to send to Italy for an able musician, who might support the French opera-house, which had long been sinking, and which was supported with difficulty, at the expence of the public treasury. The new mistress, Madame Dubarry, had adopted this idea; and our ambassador at the court of Naples, the Baron de Breteuil, had been instructed to engage Piccini to come and settle in France, with an annual pension of two thousand crowns,* on condition of giving us French operas.

Scarce had he arrived, when my friend the Marquis de Caraccioli, ambassador from Naples, came and recommended him to me, and begging that I would do for him, as he said, in the great opera-house, what I had done for Gretry in the opera-comique.

At this very time, the musician Gluck had arrived from Germany, as strongly recommended to the young queen by her

* 250l.

brother the emperor Joseph, as if the success of German music had been an important affair of state. There had been written at Vienna, upon the plan of a ballad, by Noverre, a French opera, called *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Gluck had composed the music; and this opera, with which he began in France, had met with the greatest success. The young queen had declared in favour of Gluck; and Piccini, on his arrival, found him established in the public opinion, both at court and in the city. He not only found nobody to favour himself, but appeared at court under the odious character of a musician protected by the mistress of the late king; while, in the city, he was regarded with enmity by all the French musicians, who found the German music more easily imitated than the Italian, the style and accent of which they despaired of attaining.

Had I been at all a politician, I would have taken the side on which court favour lay; but the favoured music, with its

Teutonic accents, was no more like what I had heard by Pergolese, by Leo, by Burancello, &c. than the style of Crebillon is like that of Racine; and to prefer the Crebillon to the Racine of music, would have been an effort of dissimulation to which I could not have been equal.

Besides, I had taken it into my head to transport the Italian music to our two opera-houses; and you have seen that in the comic opera, I had made a very good beginning. Not that the music of Gretry was Italian music in high perfection; it was as yet far from reaching that complete harmony which transports us in the music of the great masters. But he could make a good song; his expression was natural; his airs and duos agreeably composed; sometimes even he used his instruments happily in the orchestra; his taste and understanding were sufficient to supply what was deficient in point of art and genius; and if his music had not all the charm, and all

the richness of that of Piccini, of Sacchini, of Paisiello, it had the same rythm, accent, and prosody. I had thus demonstrated that, in the comic department at least, the French language might possess a music of the same style as the Italian.

I had still the same trial to make in the tragic department, and chance supplied me with an opportunity. The problem was more difficult to solve, and that for other reasons than were commonly supposed.

Dignified language is less favourable to music: first, because its turns are not so lively, so strongly accented, or so suited to the expression of song as comic language; secondly, because it has less extent, copiousness, and freedom in the choice of expression. But a much greater difficulty arose to me from the idea I had formed of lyric poetry, and from the theatrical form I had designed to give it. In conjunction with Gretry, I had made the fruitless attempt in the opera

of Cephalus and Procris. By dividing the action into three scenes, of which one was voluptuous and brilliant; the palace of Aurora, her waking, her loves, the pleasures of her celestial court; the second, gloomy and terrible, where jealousy pours her poison into the soul of Procris; the third, affecting, passionate, tragic,—the error of Cephalus, and the death of his wife, pierced by his arrows, and expiring in his arms. This seemed to answer my idea of an interesting representation; but as I did not succeed in this first attempt, and ascribed the disgrace in part to myself, my distrust of my own powers amounted to fear.

The sense of my own weakness, and the good opinion I had of the celebrated composer whom I had met with in Piccini, induced me therefore to think of taking the fine operas of Quinault; of retrenching the episodes and the superfluous details, and thus leaving only their beauties. I might also add airs, duos, monologues, in recitative; choruses

in dialogue and in contrast. I might thus accommodate them to the Italian music, and might form a species of lyric poem, more varied, more animated, more simple, less detached in its action, and infinitely more rapid than the Italian opera.

Even Metastasio, whom I studied, whom I admired as a model of the art of adapting words to singing, appeared to me insupportably languid and tedious. I was shocked at his double intrigues, his amorous episodes, the multitude of his detached scenes, and his airs, which were almost always lost like a vignette at the end of the scenes. I wished a full and closely united action, in which the incidents, well joined together, should be themselves the subject of the song, so that the song should be only a more lively expression of the sentiments that were diffused over the scene; while the airs, duos, and choruses, were interwoven in the recitative.

I wished besides, that the French opera, while it acquired these advantages, should preserve its pomp, its wonders, its illusions; so that, though enriched with all the beauties of Italian music, it might still be that spectacle.

Où les beaux vers, la danse, la musique,
L'art de tromper les yeux par les couleurs,
L'art plus heureux de seduire les cœurs,
*De cent plaisirs fait un plaisir unique.**

In this spirit it was, that the opera of Roland was new-modelled. When I had brought that poem into the condition I desired, my joy was as great as if I had written it myself. I saw the work of Quinault in its native and simple beauty; I saw the idea which I had formed of a French lyric poem almost, if not wholly, realized, by an able musician. This musician did not understand two

* Where fine poetry, dancing, music, the art of spreading illusions of colouring before the eyes, the still happier art of captivating the heart, unite a thousand pleasures in one.

words of French; I undertook to instruct him. 'When,' said he, 'shall I be able to begin to this work?'—'To-morrow morning,' said I; and next day I went to his house.

You may conceive how laborious I found it to instruct him: it was necessary to explain line by line, and almost word by word; and when he had become master of the meaning of a passage, I recited it to him, marking distinctly the accents, the prosody, the cadence of the lines, the pauses and semipauses; he listened with avidity, and I had the pleasure of seeing, that what he had heard was faithfully noted down; the accent and quantity of the language struck so correctly his excellent ear, that it seldom happened, in his music, that either the one or the other was mistaken. So quick was his sensibility in marking the most delicate inflexions of the voice, that he could express the very finest shades of sentiment.

It was inexpressibly delightful to me to see an art, or rather a genius, displaying itself before my eyes, of which, till then, I had not the least idea. His harmony was in his mind. His orchestra, and all the effects which it would produce, were full in his thoughts. He wrote his song with a stroke of the pen; and when the plan was sketched out, he filled up all the parts, whether performed by instruments or by the voice, and distributed the strokes of melody and harmony, as an able painter would have disposed his shades and colours upon canvass. Having completed this labour, he opened his harpsichord, which till then he had been using as a table; and I heard an air, a duo, a chorus, complete in every part,—while my ear and soul were transported by the truth, the intelligence of its expression, and the magic of its numbers.

Then it was that I found myself in possession of the man whom I sought, the man who was master of his art, and

disposed of it at pleasure; and in this manner was composed the music of Roland, which, in spite of faction, met with the most splendid success.

Meanwhile, as the work proceeded, the zealous admirers of good music, at the head of whom were the Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors, rallied round the harpsichord of Piccini, with the view of hearing every day some new scene; and their enjoyment every day formed a compensation for my trouble.

Among these admirers of music, none were more distinguished than the Messrs. Morellets, my personal friends, and the most useful whom Piccini had met with in France. By them, on his arrival, he had been received, had been lodged, and furnished with the first necessaries of life. They spared nothing upon him, and their house was his own. I took pleasure in thinking that the view of our connection was an additional cause of the interest they felt in him; and

this object of common affection furnished a new aliment to my friendship for them.

The Abbé Morellet and myself had, during twenty years, lived constantly in the same societies. We had often differed in opinion, but had always agreed in principles and sentiments, and in mutual esteem for each other. In our warmest disputes, no tendency towards bitterness or asperity had ever mingled; though we did not flatter, we loved each other.

His brother having lately arrived from Italy, was quite a new friend to me, and had gained my heart by his probity and frankness. They lived together; and their sister, the widow of M. Leyrin de Montigny was coming from Lyons with her young daughter, to embellish their society.

The abbé, who had informed me of the happiness they had a prospect of enjoying, by being united into one family, wrote to me one day: 'My friend, the ladies arrive to-morrow; come, I beseech

you, and assist us in giving them a good reception.'

My destiny was now about to assume a new aspect; and this note forms the era of that virtuous and unalterable happiness which awaited me in my old age, and which, for twenty years, I have uninterruptedly enjoyed.

BOOK X.

So long as heaven had, in Madame Odde, left me a sister whom I tenderly loved, and who loved me rather with a filial than a sisterly affection, there was always a place where I could go, and spend my old age in peace. I was sure of finding in her worthy and virtuous husband a real friend, whose house and whose children would have been my own. The esteem and the confidence which Odde had acquired, the excellent reputation which he enjoyed in his profession, rendered his promotion easy and certain; and had he only retained his employment at Saumur, my little fortune, added to his, might have enabled us to live gen-

teelly and comfortably. When therefore the world and I should have been tired of each other, there remained an honourable and agreeable retreat for my old age. In this happy assurance, I allowed myself, as you have seen, to be carried along by the current of life, and without anxiety saw myself approaching its decline.

But when I had lost my sister and her children; when Odde's affliction prompted him to abandon a city in which he saw nothing but tombs; and when, throwing up his employment, he retired to his native place; my future prospects, hitherto so serene, were darkened, and I saw nothing for me except the dangers of marriage, or the solitude of a dismal celibacy, and a deserted old age. I was afraid of finding in marriage domestic troubles, of which I saw a thousand examples, and which I could never have survived. But a still more dreadful condition would be that of an old man forced either to drag himself into company, infirm, tiresome, and an object of general

contempt, or to remain by himself, abandoned to the mercy of his servants, to their rude insolence, and servile dominion.

In this painful situation, I had more than once attempted to find a companion, and to adopt a family which might supply the place of that which death had mown down around me. But by a happy fatality, none of my plans had succeeded, when the sister and the niece of my friends the Morellets arrived in Paris. It was a gift from heaven.

Both certainly appeared to me extremely agreeable; the mother, from her frankness, cordiality, and kindness; the daughter, from an air of candour and modesty; and both from a style of conversation which I easily perceived to be equally full of judgment and wit. But I did not conceive that now, when I was more than fifty years old, I could be a proper husband for a young person who was little more than eighteen. Her youth, the lustre of her beauty, those charms of which nature

had just completed the formation, while they dazzled me, tended also to banish hope, and with hope the desire of possessing her.

My expectations, therefore, from this agreeable adventure, were confined to the advantage of a new and charming society.

Whether Madame de Montigny was prepossessed in my favour, or whether my plain good humour pleased her at first sight, she soon treated the friend of her brothers like an old friend of her own, whom she had met with anew. We supped together. This supper was animated by the joy which they all felt at meeting. I shared it, as if I had been one of themselves. I was invited to dinner next day, and gradually formed the habit of visiting them almost daily.

The more I talked with the mother, and the more I heard the daughter converse, the more did I discover in both that amiable character which has always charmed me. But once again, my age, and the narrowness of my fortune, al-

lowed me little pretensions to the happiness which I foresaw would attend the husband of Mademoiselle de Montigny; and more than two months had elapsed before the idea of aspiring to this happiness had once occurred to me.

One morning, the Abbé Maury, a friend of mine and of the Morellets, called upon me, and said, 'Shall I tell you a piece of news? Mademoiselle de Montigny is going to be married.'—'Married to whom?'—'To you.'—'To me?'—'Yes, to yourself.'—'You are either mad or dreaming.'—'I am neither; it is a very sensible thing, of which none of your friends entertain the least doubt.'

'Listen,' said I, 'and believe me, for I speak seriously. Mademoiselle de Montigny is charming; she is, I believe, accomplished; and for that very reason I never entertained the foolish thought of pretending to the happiness of being her husband.'—'Well, without pretending to it, you will be her husband.'—'At my

age!'—'At your age indeed! you are young still, and in perfect health.' He then begins and employs his whole eloquence in proving that nothing could be *more suitable; that I should* be beloved; that we should be very happy together; and, with a prophetic tone, he foretold that we should have handsome children.

After this sally, he left me to my own reflections; and while saying to myself that he was a fool, I began soon to be no wiser than he.

My fifty-four years no longer appeared so formidable an obstacle; health, at this age, might supply the place of youth. I began to think that I might inspire, not love indeed, but a kind and tender friendship; and I recollected what wise men had said, that more happy marriages are made by friendship than by love.

I thought I observed this young and handsome person take pleasure in seeing and in listening to me; her fine eyes seemed to view me with an expression of interest and kindness. I went even so far

as to think that the attentions with which her mother honoured me, and the pleasure which her smiles expressed at seeing me a constant visitor, might perhaps be mingled with some disposition favourable to the wish which I dared not form. I was not rich; but a hundred and thirty thousand livres,* securely lent out, were the fruit of my economy. In short, since to a sincere friend like the Abbé Maury this union appeared not only reasonable, but desirable on both sides, why should I myself think it so unsuitable?

I had engaged this day to dine with the Morellets. I went with an emotion which was new to me. I even think I remember bestowing a little more care on my dress; and from that time, I bestowed a serious attention upon what began strongly to interest me. Not a word, not a look was neglected: I made delicate and imperceptible advances, slight

* About £5500.

trials of their mind and disposition. The abbé did not seem to pay any attention to this; but his sister, his brother, and his niece, appeared to me pleased with every thing which I did or said.

About this time the abbé took a voyage to Brienne, in Champagne, to visit the unhappy Lomenies, with whom he had been acquainted from his youth; and during his absence, our society became more familiar and more intimate.

I knew well that these appearances might be flattering, and that the charm of a first connection might be deceitful; I knew the deception which might be produced by the union of grace and beauty. Two or three months acquaintance were very little to ascertain the character of a young person. I had seen more than one in the world who had been taught only to feign and dissemble; but I had heard such a favourable account of Mademoiselle de Montigny's character, and it appeared to me so pure and so genuine, so remote from every

kind of dissimulation; kindness, innocence, tender modesty, were so clearly expressed in her countenance and language, that I felt an invincible inclination to believe her such as she appeared; and if I was not satisfied with such strong probabilities, I could no longer trust to any thing.

A walk to the gardens of Sceaux finally determined me. Never did this place appear so beautiful; never had I breathed the air of the country with so much delight; every thing was embellished by the presence of Mademoiselle de Montigny: her looks spread around her a new kind of enchantment. I did not experience that delirium of the senses which is called love; but a tranquil pleasure, such as that of pure spirits is represented. Nay, it appears to me, that then, for the first time, I knew the real feeling of love.

Till then, the pleasure of the senses had been the only allurement which had seduced me. Here I was transported beyond myself by more invincible charms;

these were candour, innocence, mild sensibility, timid modesty, propriety, like a veil, thrown over grace and beauty; it was virtue crowned with the flowers of youth, which transported my soul still more than my eyes; a kind of enchantment, a thousand times superior to all those of the Armidas whom I had met with in the world.

My emotion was the stronger from its being suppressed. I was ardently desirous of making the confession; but to whom could it be addressed, and how would it be received? The worthy mother gave me an opportunity. In the alley where we were walking, she was at a few steps distance with her brother. 'I must,' said she, smiling, 'have a great deal of confidence in you, to allow you thus to carry on a private conversation with my daughter.'—'Madam,' said I, 'it is proper that I should justify this confidence, by telling you the subject upon which we were conversing. Mademoiselle was describing to me the happiness which you experience

from being all four together in the same family; and the account she gave appeared to me so enviable, that I was going to ask you whether a fifth, like myself for instance, would spoil your society?'—'I do not believe it,' replied she; 'but you should rather ask my brother.'—'For my part,' said the brother frankly, 'I should think it a very good plan.'—'And you, mademoiselle?'—'For my part,' said she, 'I hope my uncle the abbé will be of mamma's opinion; but, till his return, allow me to keep silence.'

They had no doubt of his opinion being the same, so that my intention being once declared, and the mother, the daughter, and the uncle having agreed, I had no longer any occasion to dissemble. I seemed even to perceive that a sentiment with which my mind was constantly filled, did not find the heart of its object altogether inaccessible.

The abbé's absence was long, but he arrived at last; and though the whole had been arranged without him, he gave

his consent. Next day the contract was signed. He appointed his niece his heir, after his own death, and that of his sister; and in this deed, drawn up by their notary, my only care was that of leaving my wife a handsome jointure, independent of her children.

Never was marriage concluded under happier auspices. As mutual and perfect confidence was established between Mademoiselle de Montigny and myself, and as we were both perfectly satisfied with the vow which we were about to pronounce at the altar, we pronounced it without uneasiness and without anxiety.

On our return from church, where Chastellux and Thomas had held over us the nuptial veil, they were so attentive as to leave us a few moments alone; and these moments were spent in assurances of mutual desire to render each other happy. This first effusion of two hearts, which are for ever united by sincerity on one side, by innocence on the other, and on both by the most tender friendship,

is perhaps the most delicious moment of our lives. The dinner, after dressing, was animated with a gaiety of the good old times. The guests were D'Alembert, Chastellux, Thomas, Saint-Lambert, a cousin of the Morellets, and some other common friends. All were occupied with the young bride; and like me, they were so charmed, so delighted, that any one seeing them would have supposed that each was her husband.

On leaving table, we went into a drawing room in the form of a gallery, which was adorned by the rich library of the Abbé Morellet. There a harpsichord and desks, certainly gave a promise of music; but what new and delightful music were we to hear? The opera of Roland, the first French opera to which Italian music had been adapted, was executed by the finest voices, and the most select performers of the opera.

The emotion excited by this novelty had all the charms of surprize. Piccini was at his harpsichord; he animated the

orchestra and the actors with the fire of his genius and of his song. The Swedish and Neapolitan ambassadors were present at this concert, and were delighted. The Marshal de Beauveau was also there. This kind of enchantment lasted till supper, to which the singers and performers were invited.

Thus passed this happy day; the era, and the presage of that happiness which has been diffused over the rest of my life, amid all the adversities which have often troubled, but have never been able to poison it.

It was settled that the two uncles, the mother, and we, should live together, and should each pay a fifth of the household expence. This arrangement suited me in every respect; and it united the advantage of a set of friends completely formed, whom we had only to enjoy.

I have made you acquainted with part of those whom we could call our friends; but there are others whom I have hitherto

mentioned only slightly, and upon whom my memory dwells with pleasure.

You, my children, have a thousand times heard your mother and her family say, how agreeable it was to us to live with M. de Saint-Lambert, and his friend the Countess d'Houdetot; and how charming a society was that in which wit, taste, the love of literature, all the most essential and most desirable qualities of the heart, attracted us sometimes towards the wise D'Eaubonne, and sometimes into the agreeable retreat of La Sévigné de Sanois. Never were two souls and two minds united in more perfect union. But they particularly resembled each other in an amiable solicitude to make their house agreeable to their friends. It was a politeness at once easy, attentive, full of exquisite taste, such as comes from the heart, and reaches it, and which is known only to feeling souls.

Saint-Lambert and I had been members together of the societies of the Baron d'Holbach, of Helvetius, and of Madame

Geoffrin; we were constant members also of that of Madame Necker; but, in the latter, I dated farther back than he; I was almost the first member.

It was at a citizen's ball, a singular enough circumstance, that I had become acquainted with Madame Necker. She was still young, handsome enough, had a brilliant complexion, and danced ill, but with spirit.

Scarce had she heard my name, than she came up to me with the genuine expression of pleasure. 'On my arrival at Paris,' said she, 'one of my wishes was to become acquainted with the author of the Moral Tales. I did not expect to make so fortunate a meeting at a ball. I hope it will not be a passing acquaintance.'—'Necker,' said she to her husband, calling to him, 'come and unite with me in inviting M. Marmontel, the author of the Moral Tales, to do us the honour of being our visitor.' M. Necker was very civil in his invitation. I went. Thomas was the only literary man whom

they knew before me. But in the fine hotel in which they settled, Madame Necker soon selected and formed her society after the model of that of Madame Geoffrin. Madame Necker, unacquainted with the manners of Paris, had none of the charms of a young French woman. Neither her manners nor her language were those of a woman educated in the school of the arts, and formed in the school of the world. There was no taste in her dress, no ease in her demeanour, no charm in her politeness. Her mind, as well as her countenance, were too carefully adjusted to possess grace.

But a charm more worthy of herself was that of decency, of candour, of kindness. A virtuous education, and solitary studies, had given her soul every improvement which excellent talents and dispositions can derive from cultivation. Feeling, in her, was perfect; but her thought was often confused and vague. Meditation, instead of clearing, troubled

her ideas; by exaggerating, she expected to ennoble them; in endeavouring to extend them, she lost herself in abstraction and hyperbole. She seemed to see certain objects only across a mist, which magnified them in her eyes; and her expression then became pompous to a degree which would have been laughable had we not known her to be in earnest.

Taste, in her, was less a sentiment than a result of opinions collected and written out in her common place-book. Without hearing her authorities quoted, it was easy to know upon whose judgment she had formed her own. In the art of writing, she esteemed only elevation, majesty, and pomp. Gradations, shades, varieties of colouring and tone, affected her but faintly. She had heard men praise the simplicity of La Fontaine, the ease of Sevigné; she spoke of them by hearsay, but scarcely felt them. The graces of negligent and careless ease were quite unknown to her. She disliked the language

of familiarity even in conversation. I was sometimes amused to observe how far she carried this delicacy. One day I quoted some familiar expressions, saying, that I thought they might be received into the lofty style. She rejected them as unworthy of it. 'Racine,' said I, 'was less difficult than you, for he has employed them all.' Of this I shewed her instances; but her opinion, once formed, was invariable; and the authority of Thomas, or that of Buffon, was received by her as an article of faith.

She seemed to possess rectitude and correctness only in the regulation of her duties. There every thing was precise, and strictly according to rule; there was a reason, a method even in the amusements which she seemed desirous of procuring. She was evidently quite occupied in rendering herself agreeable to her company, solicitous to entertain those whom she had invited, and attentive in saying to every one what was likely to be most agreeable; but this was all premeditated; nothing flowed spontaneously;

nothing excited any high degree of interest.

It was neither for us nor for herself, that she took all this pains; it was for her husband. To bring us acquainted with him, to make him be viewed with favour, and talked of with praise in the world, and thus to lay the foundation of his renown, was her powerful motive in founding her literary society. But it was requisite also, that her drawing-room, her dinner, should be an exhibition amusing to her husband; for in fact, he was only a cold and silent spectator. Except some acute observations which he threw out here and there, he was quite a mute, and left to his wife the care of keeping up the conversation. She did every thing in her power, but there was nothing in her mind suited to table-talk. No sally, nothing quick, nothing which could keep us alive, ever escaped her. The moment she saw the scene and the dialogue languish, she became anxious and uneasy, and looked round,

as if inquiring the cause. Sometimes even she had the simplicity to complain to me of it. 'What would you have, madam?' said I, 'a man has not wit at command, nor is he always in a disposition to be agreeable. Is even M. Necker himself every day an amusing companion.'

Madame Necker's attentions, and all her desire of pleasing, would have been insufficient to overcome the disgust of being invited to dinner, only to amuse her husband. But at these dinners, as at many others, the society, enjoying each other, freed the landlord from any obligation to be agreeable, provided he freed them from any obligation to attend to him.

When Necker was minister, those who knew him only in his private life, imputed his silence, his gravity, his reserve, to the arrogance inspired by his new situation. But I can bear witness, that even before his rise in life, when he was a mere partner of Thelluson the

banker, he had the same look, the same grave and silent character; and that he was neither more amusing nor more familiar with us. He received his company civilly; but he treated none of us with that flattering cordiality, which makes politeness assume the appearance of friendship.

His daughter has said of him, 'that he knew how to keep people at a distance.' If such had been the intention of her father, she, in disclosing it, would have very rashly betrayed the secret of a pride, which was at best ridiculous. But the plain truth was, that a man accustomed from his youth to the mysterious operations of a bank, and plunged in commercial calculations; little acquainted with the world or with men, very little even with books, and whose information upon every subject not relating to his profession, was vague and superficial; such a man was called upon, by a prudent attention to his own reputation, to be reserved, that he might not betray the

poverty of his own ideas; accordingly, he spoke freely and copiously upon subjects which he knew well; but with great moderation upon every other. He was not arrogant therefore, but skilful and prudent. His charming daughter must not always be trusted to.

With respect to Madame Necker, she had friends amongst us, whom she particularly distinguished; and I was always one of these. Not that our tastes or opinions agreed very well; for I even affected to oppose my plain and vulgar ideas to her lofty conceptions; and she was under the necessity of descending from these inaccessible heights, before she could hold any communication with me. But though I could not be prevailed upon to follow her into the region of her ideas, and was more under the dominion of the senses than she could have wished, she did not love me the less.

Her society was most precious to me in one respect, from its including the Neapolitan and Swedish ambassadors,

two of the men whose absence and loss I have most regretted. The one, by his good humour, and his cordiality, as well as his taste and understanding, rendered his intercourse more desirable every day. The other, by his tender friendship, his mild philosophy, by a certain sweetness of modest and genuine virtue, by something melancholy and interesting in his language and character, attached me still more intimately. I saw them at my house, at their own, and at the houses of our friends, as often as possible, but never so often as I should have wished.

Thus happy in my society, and still more in my domestic circle, I was expecting, after eighteen months of marriage, the birth of my first child, as the event which would crown all my wishes. Alas! how cruelly was I deceived in my hopes; this child so ardently wished for, died at its entrance into the world. Its mother, astonished and anxious at not hearing its cries, asked to see it, while I, motionless and trembling, was still in the

neighbouring drawing-room waiting her delivery, when my mother-in-law came to me and said: 'come, embrace your wife, and save her from despair; your child is dead.' At these words, I felt my heart struck as with a mortal blow. Pale, cold, scarce able to stand, I dragged myself to the bed of my wife, where, making an effort to subdue my feelings, I said: 'my amiable friend, now is the time to prove that you live for me alone. Our child is no more, he died before ever he saw the light.' The poor girl raised a cry which pierced my heart, and fainted in my arms. As she will read these memoirs, let me not dwell on such cruel moments, lest I should open again that wound which bled too long.

When she had her second child, I saw her determined to suckle it. Thinking her still too weak, I opposed this resolution. The nurse whom we had chosen seemed to be the best possible; she had the look of health, a fresh complexion, a rosy mouth, fine teeth, the most

beautiful bosom, every thing except milk. This bosom was marble; the child wasted away. He was at St. Cloud; and the *curé** of the village had promised, that till its mother should be able to go and see it, he would pay attention to the child. He sent us accounts, but was so cruel as to deceive us. On our arrival at the nurse's house, we were grieviously undeceived. 'My child is ill,' said his mother; 'see how his hands are withered, and how he looks at me with eyes that implore my pity. I wish this woman to bring him to Paris, that my physician may see her.' She came; he was sent for and examined her bosom, but found no milk. He went immediately and found for us another nurse; and as soon as the child was put to this new bosom, where he found an abundant supply, the milk appeared to him so good, that he could not be satisfied.

How great was our joy to see him visibly recover, and revive like a dry and

* Rector or pastor.

perishing plant when it is watered. This dear child was Albert, and we seemed to have a pleasing presentiment of the consolations which he now affords us.

My wife, that she might keep the nurse at home, and make the child breathe a pure air, expressed a wish to have a country house, and a friend of the Morellets lent us his at St. Brice.

This village contained two very respectable men, who were very intimate with each other, and with whom I myself soon became acquainted. One was the *curé*, the eldest brother of the Abbe Maury; a man of sound understanding and excellent character, of scrupulous fidelity, and as obliging to me as he was charitable towards the poor in the village. His library was mine.

I was employed in the *Encyclopedie*. I rose with the sun; and after spending eight or ten hours of the morning in writing down upon paper the observations which I had made in the course of my studies, I spent the rest of the day

with my wife and my child. Already he formed our delight.

In proportion as the good milk of our young Burgundian girl made health flow through his veins, we saw the flesh over his little body, and his delicate limbs, grow round and firm; we saw his eyes become animated; we saw his countenance acquire colour and beauty. We thought also, we saw his little soul and understanding unfold themselves. Already he seemed to hear, and began to know us: his smile and his voice answered to the smile and voice of his mother; I saw him also take delight in my caresses. His tongue soon tried the first words of nature, those sweet names, which, when they come from the lips of a child, make their way directly to the heart of the parents.

I shall never forget the moment when, in our little garden, my child, who had never till then dared to walk without leading strings, seeing me on my knees at a few steps from him and holding

out my hands, left the arms of his nurse, and with a tottering but determined step, came and threw himself into mine. I know well that the emotion which I then experienced, is a pleasure which beneficent nature has rendered common. But woe to those sophisticated hearts, which cannot be affected but by rare and artificial impressions. A lady, a friend of ours said of me, humorously enough: 'he thinks there is not another father in the world but himself.' No, I pretend not that paternal love has any charm peculiar to me; but though this common happiness were granted to me alone, I should not feel it more sensibly. My wife felt no less the first delights of maternal affection; and you may suppose, that neither of us had a desire for any other sight, any other society, than that of our child.

Our family, however, and some of our friends, came and visited us on holidays. The Abbe Maury was among the number, and I wish you had heard how he

boasted of having prophesied my happiness.

Sometimes too we saw our neighbours, the *curé* of St. Brice, the worthy Latour, and his respectable wife, who loved mine.

We took pretty often solitary walks; and the termination of these was commonly that chesnut wood at Montmorency, to which Rousseau has given celebrity.

'Here,' said I to my wife, 'he composed that romance of Eloise, in which he has employed so much art and eloquence, in throwing over vice the colouring and the dignity of virtue.'

My wife was partial to Rousseau; she thought herself infinitely obliged to him for having persuaded women to nurse their children, and for the care he had taken to render this first period of life happy. 'We must,' said she, 'forgive something to the man who has taught us to be mothers.'

But I, in the conduct and writings of Rousseau, had seen a perpetual con-

trast of beautiful language with despicable morality; I had seen him assume the character of an apostle and martyr of truth, yet sport with it incessantly by artful sophistry; free himself by calumny from the burden of gratitude; paint his friends in the blackest and falsest colours which his ferocious disposition, and his gloomy imagination could inspire; defame those men of letters whom he had most cause to praise, that he alone might become celebrated, and might efface them all. I made my wife sensible, by the very good which Rousseau had done, of all the mischief he might have abstained from doing, if instead of employing his art in gratifying his passions,—in giving a colour to his hatred, his vengeance, his cruel ingratitude;—in clothing his calumnies under specious appearances; he had exerted himself to subdue his own pride, his irascible humour, his gloomy mistrust, his dismal animosities, and to become again what nature had formed him, full of innocent feeling, just, and good.

My wife listened to me with sadness. One day she said to me: 'My friend, I am sorry to hear you often speak ill of Rousseau. You will be accused of being actuated by some personal enmity against him, and perhaps by a little envy.'

'With regard to personal feelings,' said I, 'they would be very unjust, for he never injured nor offended me. Envy would be more possible, for my admiration of his writings is sufficient to inspire me with that passion; and I should accuse myself of it, if I surprised myself slandering him. But on the contrary, when I speak of the maladies of his soul, I experience the same deep sadness which you feel in listening to me.'—'Why then,' replied she, 'should you, in your writings, your conversation, treat him with such severity? Why dwell upon his vices? Is there no impiety in disturbing the ashes of the dead?—Yes,' said I, 'the ashes of the dead who have left no example, no recollection, which can be pernicious to the living. But ought

poisons, rendered palatable by the writings of an eloquent sophist, and of a seducing corrupter—ought the fatal impressions which his specious calumnies have made on men's minds—in short, ought all the contagion which his genius and celebrity have left behind them, to go down and be transmitted from age to age under favour of the respect which is due to the dead? I shall certainly employ every means in my power, either to guard against or to counteract the evil; and were it only to clear the memory of my friends from the stains with which he has sullied it, I shall, if possible, leave his remaining proselytes and enthusiastic admirers no choice but either to think that Rousseau was a bad man, or that he was a fool. They will accuse me of envying him. But the many illustrious men, to whom I have rendered the purest and the justest homage, will bear witness that, in my writings, justice and truth were never darkened by envy. I spared Rousseau as long as he lived, because he had need of

men's kindness, and I did not wish to injure him. He is no more; nor is it my duty to spare the reputation of a man who never spared that of any, and who in his memoirs has defamed the men who loved him best.'

With respect to Eloise, my wife allowed that it was a dangerous reading; nor was any apology necessary for what I have said in an essay on romances. Yet, had I myself always censured as severely the artful manner in which Rousseau has given an interest to the crime of St. Preux and that of Julia, one seducing his scholar, and the other abusing the sincerity and probity of Wolmar? I must acknowledge the contrary; my moral feelings were affected by my new situation, and by the influence which personal interest has over our opinions and sentiments.

In consequence of living in a world where the public morals are corrupted, it is difficult not to contract at least indulgence for fashionable vices. Opinion,

example, the seductions of vanity, and above all, the allurement of pleasure, efface, in young minds, the original sense of right and wrong: the air and tone of levity, with which old libertines laugh at the precepts of virtue, and ridicule the rules of delicate propriety, make us become accustomed to these errors, and cease to attach any importance to them. This pliability of conscience was particularly cured by my new situation.

Shall I say it? a man must be a husband, he must be a father, in order to judge soundly of those contagious vices, which attack morality in its very source; of those agreeable and treacherous vices, which spread trouble, shame, and despair through a family.

An unmarried man, insensible to those afflictions which he never experienced, thinks neither of the tears which he will make others shed, nor of the fury and vengeance which he will kindle in their breasts. Busy, like the spider, in spreading his nets, and in watching the favour-

able moment for securing his prey, he either expunges from his moral system, all respect for the most sacred ties, or, if they sometimes force themselves to his recollection, he regards them as laws that are now become obsolete. What so many others allow themselves to do, or boast of having done, appears to him, if not lawful, at least very excusable. Since licentiousness reigns, he thinks he may fairly avail himself of it.

But when he himself has been placed in the number of those whom an artful seducer may render unhappy for life, and sees that, when the artifices, the flattering and winning language of a young coxcomb have surprised either the innocence of a young girl, or the weakness of a married woman, it is sufficient to drive to despair the most virtuous man, and one day perhaps himself; then warned by his personal interest, he feels how inviolable, in the eyes of a husband and of a father, ought to be the sacredness of conjugal and domestic du-

ties. Then it is that he views with an eye of severity, the guilt and shame of dissolute behaviour, notwithstanding the embellishments of eloquence, and the outward appearance of decency and propriety, under which it may be disguised by the art of an industrious writer.

I blamed Rousseau therefore, but while blaming him, I grieved that malignant passions, gloomy pride, and vain glory, had spoiled a character originally so excellent.

Had I felt any passion for celebrity, two great examples would have cured me, that of Voltaire, and that of Rousseau; examples different, and in many respects opposite, but agreeing in this, that the same thirst of praise and of renown had been the torment of their days.

Voltaire, who was lately dead, had sought glory by every path which lies open to genius, and had deserved it by immense labours and by the splendour of his talents. But in every one of these paths he had met envy, and all the furies which follow

in her train. Never was a man of letters exposed to so many attacks, with no crime, except great talents, and the ardent desire of displaying them. Those who appeared as his enemies, believed they would rank as his rivals; those whom he carelessly trampled under foot, continued still to insult him in the mire. His whole life was a contest, which he carried on with indefatigable eagerness. The combat was not always worthy of him; he had oftener insects to crush, than serpents to stifle. But though he did not provoke, he never could overlook an offence; the meanest of his aggressors was chastised with his own hand: ridicule was the instrument of his vengeance, and he made cruel and dreadful use of it. But to repose, the greatest of blessings, he was always a stranger. Envy, it is true, seemed at length weary of persecuting him, and spared him at least on the brink of the tomb. In the journey to Paris, which, after a long exile, he was allowed to take, he enjoyed

his renown, and the enthusiastic gratitude of a whole people, for the pleasures which they owed him. The last and feeble effort which he made to please them, *Irene*, was applauded as much as *Zara* had been; and this representation, in which he was crowned, afforded him the most splendid triumph. But what a moment was that in which he obtained this consolation! Next day I saw him in bed. 'Well,' said I, 'are you at length satiated with glory?'—'Ah! my friend,' cried he, 'you talk to me of glory, and I am on the rack; I am dying amid frightful sufferings.'

Thus closed the career of a man, the most illustrious in literature, the most agreeable in society. He was susceptible of resentment, but he was also warmly alive to friendship. That, with which he honoured my youth, was unaltered till his death; and one of the last proofs of it which he gave me, was the kind and graceful manner in which he received my wife, when I introduced her to him. His house at this time was

never empty of persons who came to call upon him, and we were witnesses of the fatigue which he took to give each a suitable answer. His strength was exhausted by this continual attention; and to his true friends, the spectacle was painful. But we often supped with him, and there we enjoyed the last faint lights of that mind which was soon to be extinguished.

Rousseau was unhappy as well as he, and through the same passion. But you may see by the letters of Voltaire, that in his ambition there was modesty at bottom; whereas the writings of Rousseau prove his to be swollen with pride.

I had seen him in the society of the most distinguished literary men; this was not enough for him; he was offended by their celebrity; he thought them jealous of his. Their kindness was viewed by him with mistrust. He first suspected, and then slandered them. He had friends in spite of himself, who heaped benefits upon him; their kindness was

burdensome to him. He received their benefits; but he accused them of having wished to degrade him; and their benevolence was rewarded with the most odious defamation.

He was always spoken of in company with a particular interest. Censure, even when it touched him, was full of respect, and tempered with praise. It was on that account, he said, only the more artful and treacherous. In the most peaceful repose he always chose either to believe, or to say that he was persecuted. His malady consisted in imagining, that the most common and accidental occurrences were contrived with some intention of injuring him, as if the whole world had fixed upon him eyes of envy. If the Duke de Choiseul had undertaken the conquest of Corsica, it had been in order to deprive him of the glory of being its legislator. If the same duke went to Montmorency, to sup with the lady of Marshal Luxembourg, it was in order to usurp the place which he usually

held at her table. Hume, according to him, had felt envy at the reception which he had received from the prince of Conti. He never forgave Grimm for some preference which he had obtained over him from Madame d'Epinay; and you may see in his memoirs how severely his vanity revenged this offence.

Thus Voltaire's life and his had been perpetually, but differently agitated. To the one it had brought often very severe uneasiness, but at other times very lively enjoyments; to the other, there had been nothing but floods of bitterness, with hardly any mixture of joy and sweetness. Nothing assuredly could have tempted me to put myself in the condition of Rousseau; he himself had not been able to endure it; and after having embittered his own days, I do not wonder that he should voluntarily have abridged their sad period.

With regard to Voltaire, I own his glory appeared to me too dearly purchased by all the tribulations to which it had

exposed him; and I again say,—'less splendour, and more repose.'

Limited in my ambition, first by the necessity of suiting my flight to the feebleness of my wings, and then by the love of that ease of mind which accompanies peaceful labour, and which appeared to me the share of humble mediocrity, I should have been satisfied with this happy condition. Early, therefore, renouncing all presumptuous attempts, I had in a manner capitulated with envy, and had confined myself to modes of writing, in which success could be easily forgiven. I was not on that account spared; and I experienced that, in little minds, little things can excite an envious malignity.

But I had laid down two principles: one, never to provoke hostility by any thing offensive in my writings; the other, to despise its attack, and never to answer. I continued for thirty years immoveable in this resolution; and all the rage of the Frerons, the Auberts, and

others of the same stamp, had not been able to rouse me against them.

Why then had I been less passive on occasion of the musical quarrel? Because I was not the only person insulted by my adversaries; and because I had to avenge the cause of an artist inhumanly attacked in his dearest interests.

Piccini was the father of a numerous family, which subsisted by the fruits of his industry: his mild and peaceful character rendered him still more interesting. I saw him alone, devoid of intrigue, labouring with all his might to please a new nation; and I, at the same time, saw a merciless junto furiously attacking him like a swarm of wasps. I expressed my indignation; the junto was enraged, and the wasps turned all their stings upon me.

The leaders of the party had a press at command to print their witticisms, and a journal to give them circulation. Here I was insulted every day. I had not the same advantage for defending myself;

and though I had, I should not have liked this pitiful warfare. However, I wished to laugh in my turn; since to be angry would have been making a very foolish figure.

I conceived the idea of putting their intrigue into action, and painting them to the life: indeed, to make them ridiculous, I had only to put their own words into rhyme. They printed their prose, I repeated my verses; and every day we tried which could raise the heartiest laugh.

Thus was composed my poem upon music, in defence of Piccini. Perhaps it would have been better had I allowed Roland, Atys, Didon, &c. to speak for themselves; but I have not always done what was best; and, on this occasion, I own his injury and mine did not appear sufficiently avenged by a contemptuous silence. After all, if out of a dispute so frivolous and ephemeral, I have composed a poem in twelve cantos, these are the incidents which insensibly led me

ork. I might certainly have spent my time better; but my habitual labour required relaxation, and the moments which I bestowed on Polyhymnia were only those of amusement.

The period of my residence at Saint-Brice, was marked by an event of more serious interest. This was the retreat of M. Necker from the ministry of finance. I have already said that his character was not at all seducing. He had never given me any reason to think him my friend; nor did I consider myself as his. But as he expressed for me as much esteem and benevolence as I could expect from a man so coldly polite, and as I had a high opinion of his talents, his understanding, his ambition to distinguish himself in office by doing good to the nation, I was afflicted at his retreat.

I had, besides, the most sincere veneration for Madame Necker; for I had seen nothing in her but kindness, wisdom, and virtue; and the particular affection with which she honoured me,

made it highly incumbent on me to feel an interest in an event, which, I had no doubt, would affect her very much.

When I learned it at Saint-Brice, thinking them already retired to their country house at Saint-Ouen, I went there immediately. They were not yet arrived, and I went on to meet them at Paris. I met them on the road. 'You were coming to see us?' said Necker; 'get into our carriage, and come to Saint-Ouen.' I accompanied them thither. We were alone the whole evening with Germani, Necker's brother; and neither the husband nor wife made any secret of their deep sadness. I attempted to lighten it, by talking of the regret which the public would feel, and the just respect which would follow them into their retirement; in which I was not flattering them. 'I regret,' said Necker, 'only the good which I had to do, and which I might have done, had time been allowed me.'

For my part, I then saw in his situation only an honourable retreat, an independent fortune, repose, liberty, freedom in the choice of his occupations, a society which was not affected by the vicissitudes of court honour, while his domestic life united every pleasure which a wise man could desire. But I own that I spoke according to my own tastes, rather than according to his; for I was fully sensible that he could not be satisfied without the occupation of public business, and the influence which it bestows. His wife appeared grateful for the care which I took to weaken the impression of the blow which had struck him. My connection with them, therefore, far from being loosened by this event, became only the closer.

My wife, out of love for me, received gracefully their attentions and invitations. But she had an insurmountable aversion for M. Necker. She had brought from Lyons a conviction that M. Necker was the cause of the disgrace of M. Turgot,

the benefactor of her family. Nor did she find in Madame Necker that winning air which she herself had with her friends.

Very different, and much more agreeable, was another Genevese lady, the fai Vermenoux, the most intimate friend o M. and Madame Necker. Since meetin her at their house, whose union she ha promoted, I had always cultivated he acquaintance. But her friendship for m wife had, since our marriage, formed new tie between us.

Madame de Vermenoux, at first sight was the image of Minerva; but thi commanding countenance was soon en livened by an air of kindness, of serenity by that decent and unaffected gaiety whic adorns wisdom, and renders it agreeable The mutual inclination which she an my wife felt for each other, was sympathy if by that word we understand the perfe harmony of mind, taste, and character and though habitually retired, and natur ally reserved, with what pleasure did sh

see us arrive at her country house at Sèves: in the little suppers which we took with her at Paris, how joyfully and how frankly did her soul yield itself to the pleasures of intimacy! Death carried her off, while she was still young enough to taste the charms of life. But, though I regretted her, I have since discovered that her life, had it continued longer, would have been filled with nothing but sadness and bitterness. In a short time, she would have lived too long.

I returned to Saint-Brice, where my wife and I had an object of tender interest; it was her new pregnancy. Good air, exercise, a regular country life, had been in her favour; and at Paris, to which the winter recalled us, she brought into the world the handsomest of our children. To us, therefore, every thing seemed still prosperous; and as yet, nothing could be more agreeable than the life which we led.

Atys, in spite of envy, met with the same success as Roland. The fine airs

of these two operas, sung to the harpsichord, were the delight of our society, in the concerts of the Countess d'Houdetot, and of her sister-in-law, Madame de la Briche.

The latter, who was a good musician, and sung with taste, though with a weak voice, was so singularly modest as to bring to her house talents which eclipsed her own; and far from shewing the least jealousy, she was the first to draw them forth. She was a perfect model of propriety without any affectation; easy and polite in her conversation; frank in her gaiety; she talked well, she told a story well, she was simple, yet naturally agreeable. Her language and her style were pure, and even elegant; but though she had feeling enough to be capable of friendship, no passion interrupted her mildness and equanimity. She was not the woman whom you would have wished for in order to be inspired with any violent emotion; but she it was whom

you would have selected in order to taste a tranquil happiness.

Talking of my old acquaintances, I mentioned having seen M. Turgot; but, whether there was any thing unsuitable in our manners and character, or that my connection with M. Necker displeased him still more, he had treated me with uniform coldness. Nevertheless, as the old friend of the Abbé Morellet, he had taken an interest in my marriage; and I was indebted to my wife for some marks of his kindness, which I accepted with the more respect, because he was in disgrace.

Meanwhile, I was successively losing my old friends. The Swedish ambassador, recalled by the king to be his confidential minister, was taken from me for ever. The Neapolitan ambassador left us, on being appointed viceroy of Sicily. My separation from both was the more grievous, as being likely to prove eternal. The letters of Caraccioli were full of his regret. He was constantly inviting me

to come with my family to Sicily, offering to send a vessel to Marseilles, which might transport us to Palermo.

I have mentioned the friendship, which, for forty years, I had cherished for D'Alembert, as well as how valuable his was to me. Since the death of Mademoiselle l'Espinasse, he was consumed with languor and sadness. Still, however, he sometimes allowed this consoling friendship to pour a few drops of its balm into the deep wound of his heart. With my wife, in particular, he took pleasure in withdrawing himself from his sorrow. She regarded him with the tenderest interest. He and Thomas, the two men of letters, whose talents and understanding seemed most likely to strike her with awe, were those with whom she felt herself most at her ease. There was no amusement which she preferred to their conversation.

Thomas appeared still likely to live long to glory and friendship.

But D'Alembert began to feel the agonies of the stone; and he soon existed only to linger and die slowly amid the most cruel sufferings.

In the eulogy of him which I have feebly attempted, I have endeavoured to paint the mild equality of his character, always genuine, always simple, because it was natural, remote from every kind of falsehood and ostentation, *compounded of strength and weakness; but whose strength was virtue, and whose weakness, benevolence.*

While I wept for him, I was far from any thought of succeeding him in the office of perpetual secretary to the French academy. I was myself on the point of following him to the tomb, being struck with a malignant fever similar to that from which Bouvard had already saved me, and of which he cured me again. How ought I to bless the memory of a man to whom I have twice owed my life, and who, till his mind and strength failed, never ceased to pay my children the most tender attention.

Scarce was I recovered, when I found it necessary to go to Fontainebleau, in order to present the new opera which I had composed with Piccini. This opera was *Didon*. As it was wholly my own, I had written it according to my taste; and that our new music might be forwarded another step, I had taken advantage of the moment when Piccini had newly obtained a mark of favour, which rekindled his genius. It happened in the following manner.

This year, (1783) the Marshal de Duras, gentleman of the bed-chamber in waiting, asked me if I had written nothing new? and expressed a desire of being able to present the queen, at Fontainbleau, with the novelty of a fine opera. 'But,' said he, 'I wish it to be your own work. We are not satisfied with your vamping up the old operas of Quinault.' This was such language as I should have expected from my brother member of the academy, and from the

kindness with which he had long treated me.

'My lord marshal,' said I, 'I can promise nothing, so long as Piccini, my musician, shall continue in disgrace. You know the rage with which the success of Roland and Atys has been disputed against him; they have both succeeded; and hitherto real talent has triumphed over faction; but the Iphigenia in Tauris has failed.

'De Vismes, the manager of the opera, in order to swell his profits by the rivalship of the two parties, has determined to make Gluck and Piccini try their strength upon the same subject; he has supplied them with two poems upon the subject of Iphigenia in Tauris. In the barbarous poem which has fallen to the share of Gluck, he has found horrors suited to the energy of his style, and has strongly expressed them. The poem given to Piccini, however ill composed, was found susceptible of a milder interest; and by means of the corrections which the au-

thor made under my eyes, he has been able to produce an affecting music. But after the strong impression which the ferocious opera of Gluck had made upon men's eyes and ears, that produced by the opera of Piccini appeared slight and feeble. The Iphigenia of Gluck has remained upon the theatre, of which it had got possession; that of Piccini could not support itself: he is in consternation; you alone, my lord marshal, can rouse him from his dejection.'— 'What must be done for that purpose?' inquired he.—'A thing,' said I, 'which is very easy and very just. To change into a pension the annual gratification which was promised him, when he was desired to come into France.'—'Very willingly,' said the marshal. 'I will ask the queen to bestow upon him this favour, and hope to obtain it.'

He asked and obtained it; and when Piccini went with me to thank him, he said, 'You must prove your gratitude

her majesty by composing, this year, a fine opera for her.'

'I ask no better,' said Piccini, as he went away: 'but what opera shall we compose?'—'We must compose,' said I, 'the opera of *Didon*: I have long been revolving the plan of it. But I forewarn you, that I mean to unfold my ideas at length; that you will have long scenes to set to music; and that, in these scenes, I shall require a recitative as natural as simple repetition. Your Italian cadences are monotonous; the accents of our language are more various and better supported, and I beseech you to mark it down in the same manner as I repeat it.'—'Well,' said he, 'we shall see.' In this manner we formed the design of bestowing on recitative that ease, that truth of expression, which was so favourable to the performance of the celebrated actress, for whom the character of Dido was destined.

The time was short; I wrote the poem with great rapidity; and in order to withdraw Piccini from the distractions of

Paris, I invited him to come and compose with me in my country house; for I had got a very agreeable one, where we lived in a family way, during the summer months. On his arrival there, he began to work; and when he had completed it, Saint Huberti, the actress, who was to perform the part of Didon, was invited to come and dine with us. She sung her part at night, from one end to the other, and expressed it so well, that I thought I saw her on the stage.

She was going to take a journey into Provence: she wished to carry her part there, in order to study it by the way; and, during her absence, we were busy with the rehearsals. It was at this time that I experienced the illness which brought me to the brink of the tomb. When the moment came for going to Fontainbleau, my health was not yet completely restored, and my wife, anxious about my recovery, wished to accompany me.

While there, we dined one day with Madame de Beauveau, and heard, for the first time, that my friends had in view for me, the place of secretary to the academy, which, after d'Alembert, it was so difficult to fill.

This difficulty, which might have intimidated the vainest man, was not the one that withheld me. The place required a constant attendance, of which I thought myself incapable. With great sincerity, therefore, I declined the honour which they wished to procure for me. But motives were urged, to which I thought it my duty to yield; and it was determined that I should be one of the candidates for this place. I only insisted that there should be no solicitation on my part.

Circumstances were favourable for procuring the votes of the court. The success of *Didon* was complete; and with the panegyrics that were bestowed on the music of Piccini, some words of praise to the author of the poem were also

mingled. 'It is the only opera,' said the king, 'in which I have felt any interest.' He asked to see it twice.

This success gave me great pleasure: my wife enjoyed it, and it was this which interested me most. The excursion was agreeable to her beyond expression. We had walks in the forest, hunting parties, horse races, parties of pleasure at Tomeri, where we were entertained with sumptuous dinners of fish, and excellent grapes. Whenever the theatre was open, we had places in the box of Madame d'Angiviller, whose house was ours, and who, as well as her husband, bestowed a pleasing attention in directing towards us the notice of the numerous and excellent company, of which her house was always full. My wife, in short, enjoyed all the pleasures which could be assembled by a youthful and magnificent court, and every thing which could prove how much she herself was esteemed and loved by this elegant society; so that both for her and for me, the

abode of Fontainbleau was a continual enchantment.

Two incidents occasioned us a little uneasiness; the first was my being threatened with a relapse of the fever which I had experienced at the beginning of my journey. The court physicians would have made it a serious illness, if my wife would have listened to them. But, she, without any of their remedies, by making me breakfast every day on a basket of ripe grapes, restored me to health. The other incident was the small pox of Albert, whom we had brought along with us. But the eruption not having appeared till towards the end of the journey, we set out immediately; and Albert was put into the hands of our friend Bouvard, who took the same care of him as if he had been his own child.

BOOK XI.

ON our return to Paris, the French academy having assembled for the election of its perpetual secretary, I had eighteen votes out of the twenty-four. My two competitors were Beauzee and Suard.

Didon had met with the same success at Paris, as at court; and this opera supplied us with amusement during the winter, as Roland and Atys had done when new.

M. de la Borde, the old court banker, joined his concerts with those of the countess d'Houdetot, and of Madame de la Briche: this gave occasion to my acquaintance with him.

He had two daughters, on whom nature had bestowed every charm of countenance and voice. They were scholars of Piccini, and rendered the expression of his song still more mild and affecting.

Pleased with the politeness of M. de la Borde, I went to see him; I went sometimes and dined with him; he appeared to me honourable but plain, enjoying his prosperity without pride or ostentation, and with an equanimity the more to be esteemed, when we consider how difficult it is for a man to possess so large a fortune without having his head a little turned. With how many favours had heaven loaded him? Great affluence, an universal reputation for honour and uprightness, an unbounded credit throughout Europe; while his family consisted of six amiable children, and a wife of a mild, judicious, and agreeable character, in whose propriety and modesty there was nothing affected. She was an excellent wife, an excellent mother, a woman, in

short, who appeared blameless in the eyes of envy itself.

Che non trova l'invidia ove l'emende.

ARIOSTO.

What was wanting to the wishes of a man so completely happy? He perished on a scaffold, for no other crime besides his wealth, among that multitude of virtuous men, whom an abominable wretch had consigned to death. We were not yet threatened with this dreadful calamity, and I thought myself happy in my humble mediocrity. My country-house, during the summer, was still more agreeable to me than the city. A select society, chosen by my wife, gave variety to our leisure hours, and enjoyed with us that rural abundance supplied by our espaliers, our orchard, our vine-arbours, the fruits and vegetables of every season: cheap blessings with which nature covered a frugal table, and which converted a moderate dinner into a delicious feast.

There reigned an innocent joy, a perfect confidence, a freedom of thought, whose limits were known, and were never transgressed.

Shall I name all the guests who were assembled by friendship? Raynal, the most affectionate, the liveliest of old men; Silesia, a Genoese philosopher, who resembled Vauvenargue; Barthelemi, our walks with whom resembled those of Plato with his disciples; Bequigny, who had much also of this ancient mildness and wisdom; Carbury, a man, who, from the rich variety of his talents and knowledge, seemed to belong to every age and to every country; Boismont, a complete Frenchman in his manners, but whose agreeable conversation formed a singular contrast to his eloquence in the pulpit; Maury, who was prouder of diverting us with an amusing story, than of raising our admiration by a stroke of eloquence, and whose company made us forget his learning, and regard him only as an agreeable man; Godard, who had also

a flow of lively wit; De Seze, who soon came and rendered our conversations still more animated and charming.

'We are too happy,' said my wife, some misfortune will happen to us.' She was indeed in the right. Learn, my children, how closely grief follows joy in every situation of life.

This kind and feeling mother had nursed the third of her children. He was handsome, and in perfect health; we thought we had only to see him grow up and become still handsomer; when he was suddenly struck with a mortal stupor. Bouvard hastened to him, he employed, he exhausted all the aids of art, without being able to awake him from this fatal slumber. The child's eyes were open, but Bouvard perceived that the pupil was dilated: he drew a light over it; the eyes and the eyelid remained immoveable. 'Ah!' said he, 'the organ of sight is paralyzed; the brain is affected, there is no remedy.' The good old man wept as he said these words; he felt the blow with which he had struck the heart of a father.

At this cruel moment, I would have wished to remove the mother: but she was on her knees by the child's bedside, her eyes full of tears, her arms raised to heaven, while sobs choked her utterance: 'Allow me,' said she, 'ah! allow me, at least, to receive his last sigh.' But how did her sobs, her cries, and her tears redouble, when she saw him expire! I do not speak of my own grief, I can think only of hers. It was so deep, that for several years she was not able to hear its object named. If she spoke of it herself, it was only in ambiguous terms: 'Since my misfortune,' she would say—not being able to say, 'since the death of my child.'

In the melancholy condition of my soul, what employment could I undertake which had not some relation to maternal love and conjugal tenderness? While my heart was yet full of the sentiments of which I had before me the most affecting model, I formed the design of the opera of Penelope. This subject took possession of my fancy; the

more I thought of it, the more capable it appeared of producing great effects in music and theatrical representation.

I wrote with warmth, with all the illusion which a pathetic subject can excite in him who paints it. But it was this illusion by which I was deceived. I first persuaded myself, that the fidelity of conjugal affection would, in the lyrical drama, be equally interesting with the intoxication and despair of Dido's love; I persuaded myself, also, that in a subject which was wholly composed of interesting situations, of descriptions, of theatrical incidents, every thing would be executed according to my design, and that the probability and dignity of the action would be observed, according to the directions which I had given out to bad machinists, and awkward performers. The contrary happened; in the most interesting moments, all illusion was destroyed. Accordingly, the fine music of Piccini failed of producing almost any effect. M. Huberti, indeed, was as admirable in the

character of Penelope as she had been in that of Dido. But though she was applauded every time she appeared on the stage, she was so ill seconded, that neither at court, nor at Paris, did this opera meet with the success which I had hoped; and the fault was my own. I ought to have known better the foolish personages upon whom I made the success of such a work depend; what I have said of *Zemire et Azor*, ought to have shewn me how little they were to be trusted.

I had not been happier in choosing the subject of a comic opera, which I had composed with Piccini, for the Italian theatre; and I can hardly conceive what seduced me in the subject of the *Dormeur éveillé*, which might be entertaining in the 'Arabian Nights,' but in which there was nothing comic. For the true comic consists in laughing at a ridiculous character, which that of Assan was not.

In general, after any success, we must expect to find the public more difficult

and severe. I did not consider this sufficiently: I became more confident when I ought to have been more timid; and my vanity was punished by theatrical failures.

More indulgence was granted me in the public assemblies of the French academy: there I made no demand for applause; I spoke only to fulfil the functions of my office, or to supply the place of those who were absent. If sometimes, in my turn, I paid the tribute due to a man of letters, it was without ostentation. The little essays which I read, aimed at nothing brilliant. They were the fruit of my studies and reflections upon taste, upon language, upon style, upon the caprices of fashion, which were all subjects suited to the spirit of an academical audience, and habitually treated amongst us. Accordingly, this audience was willing to be pleased, and I felt as if surrounded by a circle of friends.

The favour which I enjoyed in our public assemblies, joined to the strict dis-

cipline of which, without any partiality, I enforced the observance in our private sittings, gave me some degree of weight and interest. The clergy thought themselves obliged to me for the attention with which they were treated; the high nobility were not less satisfied with those customary respects which were paid them, after my example; and with respect to men of letters, they knew me to be so jealous of academical equality, that they might trust to me for reminding of its rights any one who should have forgot them. Many even, convinced that in our elections I sought only to make the best possible choice, consulted me, and joined their votes with mine. I possessed influence; therefore, without intrigue, and I employed it, as was just, in overcoming the obstacles which some persons attempted to raise against the election of one of my friends.

The Abbé Maury, in his youth, had, with great success, pronounced at the Louvre, the panegyric of Saint Louis, in

presence of the French academy, and afterwards that of Saint-Augustine, before the assembly of the French clergy; he had soon become celebrated in the pulpits of Paris, and was called to preach before the king at Versailles during Christmas and Advent. He had thus acquired undoubted rights to the French academy; and he did not deny that such was the object of his ambition.

Then it was, that the rumours of calumny were raised against him; and as these reports were intended for the ears of the academy, care was taken to address them directly to its secretary. I listened to all the ill which they chose to say of him; and when I had heard the whole, I took him aside: 'You are attacked,' said I, 'and it is I that must defend you; but you must furnish me with arms to refute your enemies.' I then explained to him successively, every article of the charges which were brought against him.

He listened without emotion, and, with astonishing facility, refuted these accusations, demonstrating some to be false, and, with respect to the others, putting me in the way of ascertaining the whole myself.

The only charge, which at first he could only disprove in a vague manner, because its nature was vague, was that brought against him by an academician, who accused him of treachery and slander. The accuser was La Harpe, with whom he had been extremely intimate.

'Since it is he that accuses me of treachery,' said the Abbé Maury, 'I am entitled to demand proof. I dispense with it, however, and I undertake to prove that he calumniates me, provided always that he will explain himself, and specify the facts. Let me be confronted with him.'

I proposed this interview to the accuser, and he accepted it. But I did not choose to be the sole witness and judge; and while I invited them both to dinner,

I asked permission to admit also two of the most upright and most judicious of the academicians, M. Thomas, and M. Gaillard.

The dinner went on quietly and politely. But on rising from table, we all withdrew into a closet, and I said to our two arbiters; 'Gentlemen, M. de La Harpe thinks he has reason to complain of the Abbe Maury. The latter asserts that the complaint is without foundation. We shall hear them. Speak, M. de La Harpe, you shall be listened to in silence; and after you, the Abbe Maury shall, in like manner, be heard in silence.'

The charge was serious. It related to a satire which the Abbe Maury was said to have advised a Russian, a friend of La Harpe to write against him, during the time that all the three were intimately acquainted.

The Count de Schouvalof, the only witness whom La Harpe could have produced, was returned into Russia, and as he could not be heard, there was no means of refutation.

The Abbé Maury, therefore, in defending himself, was reduced to the necessity of discussing the accusation by itself, and of bringing forward circumstances which demonstrated its falsehood. This he did with such order, precision, and clearness; with so wonderful a degree of recollection and presence of mind, that we were confounded. In short, during this discussion, he pressed his adversary so closely, and so powerfully, that the latter remained mute. The unanimous opinion, therefore, of the three witnesses was, that La-Harpe had no reason to complain of the Abbe Maury; and in our presence, an apparent reconciliation took place between them.

'I am not the less convinced,' said La-Harpe to me, 'of what my friend Schouvalof has declared.'—'You may believe it,' said I, 'but as an honest man, you have no longer a right to say it; and without mentioning my own opinion, that of two men so just, so impartial as Thomas and Gaillard, ought to shut your mouth. For my part, you must expect

that should I hear your complaints repeated in company, I will give an account of what has just passed at my house.'

I employed equal attention in clearing up all the other misdeeds imputed to the Abbé Maury. I found them all imaginary, and destitute, not only of truth, but even of probability. From that time, it was in vain for any one to continue obstinately speaking ill of him; I replied 'that groundless praise, as well as groundless satire, would be employed only by a mean flatterer, or a malicious slanderer.' I defied even his greatest enemies to specify a fact, of which I could not prove the falsehood; and I employed my whole interest in urging my brethren to console an able man under a severe persecution, by admitting him into the academy. He was admitted, and from that time nothing could be more intimate than our mutual friendship.

There was in the character of the abbé Maury, an excessive energy and vehemence, which he could with difficulty

restrain, but which he allowed me to moderate. When I found it necessary to check his violent emotions, I censured him with a frankness which sometimes displeased, but never irritated him. He was at once violent and mild, and his justice atoned for the quickness of his feelings. One day he hastily said, 'that I made too much use of the ascendency which I had assumed over him.'—'I neither have,' said I, 'nor wish to have any ascendency over you, except that of reason, inspired by friendship; and if I employ it, it is only to prevent you from hurting yourself. I know the goodness, the uprightness of your heart; but your head is still too youthful and ardent. Your understanding is not mature, those spirits in which its strength consists require to be tempered. You know the pleasure with which I praise whatever is laudable in you; with the same sincerity I will blame whatever is reprehensible; and when a harsh truth shall appear necessary, I esteem you too much to think

myself under the necessity of softening it. In short, such is the condition on which I intend to be your friend. If you do not like it, you have only to speak, I would then be your friend no longer.' He replied only by embracing me.

'This is not all,' replied I, 'I think it my duty to exercise this severity towards you, and you ought to exercise it towards me; you have the faults which are natural to a strong mind, while I have those of a weak one. The temper of your soul may communicate tone and vigour to mine; and I require of you not to overlook any thing which marks feebleness or timidity. On proper occasions, therefore, I may give you counsels of prudence and moderation, while you may gave me those of resolution and courageous firmness.' This mutual convention dispersed those clouds which might have been raised between us by vanity and self-love.

During the same year that my friend was received into the academy we lost

Thomas, one of our most illustrious members, and highly admirable for the integrity of his manners, and the excellence of his writings.

A life uniformly upright and irreproachable! This, my children, is a rare panegyric; yet who has deserved it better than Thomas? Part, indeed, was due to nature. He was born virtuous, and had the virtues suited to every age of life. Temperate and chaste, none of the vices of effeminacy, of luxury, of voluptuousness, found access to his soul. No violent passions disturbed his repose; he knew nothing of sensual pleasure beyond what was innocent; and even of this he tasted with extreme moderation. All his powers of thought and feeling were centered in one point, the love of truth, justice, and honour, and the passion for glory. This was the spring, the active principle of his soul, the fountain of his eloquence.

He lived in the world without ever yielding to its frivolous tastes and vain

amusements: he made allowance for all weaknesses, but had none himself. He was capable of friendship, and carefully cultivated it; but he wished it to be moderate; he loved it as a tie, but would have dreaded its chain: it filled up the intervals of his labours and studies, but did not draw him from them; solitude and silence had charms for him, which he often preferred to the conversation of his friends. He allowed himself to be loved as much as you pleased, but he kept his own love within bounds.

In common society, he appeared timid, but was only indifferent. Conversation seldom fixed his attention. With a friend, or in a small circle, when he was allowed to speak on any of the subjects which he had revolved in his mind, he inspired admiration by the loftiness and abundance of his ideas, and by the majesty and dignity of his language. But in a crowd he was eclipsed; and his soul seemed then to withdraw within itself. Lively and humorous sallies made him

sometimes smile, but never laugh. He viewed women only as a cool observer, as a botanist views the flowers of a plant, but never as an *amateur* of grace and beauty. Accordingly women said, that they were less flattered by his praises, than by the vehement and passionate abuse of Rousseau.

Thomas was by disposition, and by principle, a stoic, whose virtue would have stood in need of great trials. He would, I think, have been a Rutilius in exile, a Thrasea or a Seranus under Tiberius, better than a Seneca under Nero, a Marcus Aurelius on the throne. But, placed in a period of tranquillity, and under mild reigns, fortune withheld from him both her high favours, and her extreme severities. His worth and modesty had some of the seductions of prosperity to guard against; his fortitude was not proved by any adversity. Free from those anxieties to which he who becomes a husband and a father is exposed, he was not tried by any of the great

interests of nature. He was as completely insulated as a mere individual can be in the social state, and had not even an enemy who was worthy of his anger.

It is only by his writings, therefore, that we can form a high idea of his character. There it is that we find everywhere the stamp of an upright heart, of an exalted soul; there courageous truth, the love of justice, the eloquence of virtue display themselves.

The French academy laid the foundation of the reputation of Thomas, by proposing prizes for the most eloquent eulogies of our great men. No person could outstrip, or even equal him in this career, and in the eulogy on Marcus Aurelius he surpassed himself. Elevation and depth formed the character of his ideas. Never did orator better embrace, or penetrate deeper into his subjects. Before entering upon an eulogy, he began by studying the profession in which his hero had distinguished himself; he thus praised Maurice of Saxony

like a well informed soldier; Duguay-Trouin, like a seaman; Descartes, like a natural philosopher; d'Aguesseau, like a lawyer; Sully, like a financier; Marcus Aurelius like a moral philosopher, who was equal in wisdom to Appollonius or Marcus Aurelius himself. In like manner, while he meant only to write a preface to these eulogies, he composed, under the title of essays, the most beautiful and most learned treatise of historical morality, on the subject of the praises given in every age, with various degrees of justice and truth, according to the manners of the time and the genius of the orators: a work which has not met with the celebrity it deserves.

You may suppose that a continual tension and monotonous loftiness must be the fault of Thomas' writings. His eloquence wanted that which forms the charm of Fenelon and Massillon in prose, of Virgil and Racine in verse; the effusion of a feeling heart, and the interest which it bestows. His style was

grave, commanding, but not agreeable. We admired all the characters of manly beauty; women would have desired some features of theirs: He had copiousness and magnificence, but he never had ease and facility, never the pliancy of the graces; and the same style which made him admirable for a few moments, became at length fatiguing. He was particularly blamed for exhausting his subjects, and leaving nothing to the imagination of his reader: which might, indeed, imply a want of taste and address, but which yet arose from a very singular excess of abundance.

At a time when I myself so much needed a sincere and rigid censor, Thomas, being much younger, had taken me for his. I praised him with frankness, and often even with transport; but I did not conceal my wish that his style had been more flexible and less monotonous. 'You touch only one string,' said I; 'its sounds are indeed exquisite, but are they sufficiently varied?' He listened with a

modest and attentive air, and perhaps owned to himself that my censure was just. But the austerity of his morals had been transferred to his eloquence: in attempting to render it more pliant, he would have been afraid of weakening it.

It was not my fault if he did not employ more usefully the years which he bestowed on his poem of the Czar. I allowed him clearly, that the story of this poem would be destitute of unity and interest; and I set before his eyes all the models of the epic: 'Homer,' said I, 'has, in the Iliad, sung the anger of Achilles, and in the Odyssey, the return of Ulysses to Ithaca; Virgil has sung the foundation of the Roman empire; Tasso, the deliverance of the holy city; Milton, the fall of the first man; Voltaire, the conquest of France by Henry de Bourbon, the heir of Valois. But what are you to sing? To what event, to what principal action will your narrative relate? You will describe the travels of the Czar, his wars with Charles the twelfth. the diso-

bedience and death of his son, the factions which he destroyed in his dominions, the military discipline which he established in his armies, the arts and sciences which he transplanted into his empire, the city of Petersburgh which he founded on the shores of the Baltic; and these certainly furnish materials for an historical poem, for an eloquent eulogy; but I do not see the single and simple subject of an epic poem.' He allowed that there was no answering my objection; but said, 'that if he had no room for a dramatic plot, he had a very great character to paint in the Czar.' Before consulting me, he had already composed four cantos upon the travels of the Czar into Holland, into England, into France, into Italy. This magnificent portico contained great beauties, and he hoped to find means to complete the edifice; he was at length sensible that he was attempting an impossibility, and at the end of nine years, he expressed his

regret at not having followed my advice, to abandon his enterprise.

A design, which I knew him to have formed, and which he would have executed in a most superior manner, was that of writing discourses on the history of France, of the same kind with those of Bossuet upon universal history. He would not, like Bossuet, have had the advantage of linking his events by a mysterious chain in the order of providence. But, without looking beyond the political and moral order, he would have drawn from it important lessons, and valuable inferences.

Thomas left behind him a high character, rather than a splendid renown; and he ought to be numbered among illustrious, rather than celebrated writers. Women contribute essentially to celebrity, and their votes were not in his favour.

The same year that Thomas died, I had the consolation of seeing the abbé Morellet admitted into the academy with

claims less brilliant, but not less solid than the abbé Maury. His understanding was steady and enlightened, full of sound knowledge, particularly upon subjects of public utility, and he had distinguished himself by writings which displayed a correct and pure style, a severe judgment, and a systematic arrangement. In another department, he was known to be the author of some excellent works of humour, full of taste, lively and agreeable. Lucian, Rabelais, and Swift, had taught him to handle irony and ridicule, and their disciple had become their rival. Thus my dearest friends came and sat down by me, filling up in the academy the places of those I yearly lost.

While I saw this multitude of literary men mingled in succession with the dust, I considered that I might soon follow them, and that it was time to think of my literary testament, and of selecting what I wished to remain behind me. With this view, I collected the edition of my works. I have said enough on

this subject in my prefaces, and have only to point out the occasion and the design of some of my writings.

At the time when d'Alembert was secretary to the French academy, he had it very much at heart to give an interest in our public assemblies, and to those of our private sittings at which sovereigns were present. No one contributed to this so much as himself. Nevertheless, his resources sometimes failed, and he was seriously vexed to see himself abandoned by the rest. He had then recourse to me, complaining of the negligence of so many literary men who composed the academy, and beseeching me to assist him in supporting the honour of the body.

On these august occasions, I composed pieces of poetry adapted to circumstances, such as the three poetical discourses upon eloquence, upon history, and upon the hope of surviving ourselves. This last, which was read at the reception of Ducis, the successor of Voltaire, had the merit of being suited to the oc-

casion, and made a deep impression on the assembly. Among the prose writings which I read, that with which the public seemed most pleased, was the eulogy of Colardeau, at the reception of La Harpe. But the success which gratified myself most, was that obtained by my sketch of d'Alembert's eulogy, and by the little poem on the self-devotion * of Leopold of Brunswick. With regard to this last, I think it necessary to enter into some detail, in order to give a clear view of my conduct.

The humane and heroic self-devotion displayed by Prince Leopold of Brunswick having deeply affected the young Count d'Artois, that prince had proposed to the French academy a prize of a thousand crowns for the poem in which this noble action should be most worthily celebrated.

I was then perpetual secretary of the academy, and my character of judge rendered it improper for me to enter the lists; but as it happened pretty often that

* See Note (1) at the end.

the prize of poetry was not granted, even when we allowed the poets to choose their own subject, I felt some anxiety lest nothing should appear which was worthy of the present; and how shameful and humiliating would this have been to French literature, and how distressing to the academy to acknowledge in the eyes of Europe, that so fine a subject had failed.

As I was full of the subject, and deeply affected, I could not resist the desire of treating it myself, being fully resolved that my work should not appear till after it was determined that no other should receive the prize.

I allowed, therefore, all the poems that were presented, to pass before the academy, but they were all rejected. At last, seeing them vexed that this most virtuous heroism should not be duly praised, I laid before the academy the attempt which I had made, without aiming at the prize. They were pleased to express their approbation, and the Count

d'Artois, to whom they were obliged to state the bad success of the offered prize, was at the same time informed of what one of the members of the academy had done to supply it. The prince ordered the same prize to be offered for the following year; but he wished my work to be secretly shewn to him, and allowed me to send it to the reigning prince of Brunswick.

A few days after, the Count d'Artois desired me to be informed by M. de Vaudreuil, that he had ordered for me a very rich box of gold. I replied that, on any other occasion, I would receive with respect a present from his royal highness; but that at present I could accept nothing which might lead to a suspicion of my having acted with a view to reward; that this rich box would be but a prize in disguise; that if the prince would have the goodness to give me a paper box with his own portrait upon it, I would receive it as a very precious gift, but that I wished no other. M. de Vaudreuil insisted; but he saw me so firm in my resolution, that

he gave up all hope of shaking it; and carried back the above answer to the Count d'Artois.

'Marmontel,' said the prince, 'feels these scruples only on his own account; but it would be improper in me to make him a mean present;' and after thinking a moment, he said: 'well, I will give him my portrait at full length.' The *Bailli* de Crussol, his gentlemen of the bed-chamber, was instructed to get a fine copy made, and the frame was embellished with emblems in the highest degree honourable to me.

The reigning prince of Brunswick received my homage no less favourably; he wrote with his own hand a very kind answer, accompanied by two gold medals, which had been struck to the memory of his virtuous brother.

About this period, my wife being with child for the fourth time, she and I agreed upon the necessity of taking up house. But as the separation was made with the full consent of her uncles and mother,

we went to as short a distance as possible. My wife was not insensible to the pleasure of being mistress of her own house. For my part, I must own, it had been most agreeable to me to live with the Abbé Morellet in perfect independence; and he himself felt much more at his ease with me. He had brought to his house another niece, young, agreeable, full of wit and talents, who is now Madame Cheron, and to her my wife yielded her apartment. The whole affair was thus managed in the most amicable manner.

What rendered our new situation still more agreeable was the comfort we derived from an increase of fortune. Without mentioning the very considerable profits which I derived from my works, the office of secretary to the French academy, joined to that of historiographer of buildings, which my friend M. d'Angiviller had obtained for me on the death of Thomas, produced a thousand crowns. * My constant attendance at

* £125.

the academy doubled my fees. On the death of Thomas, I had succeeded to half the pension of two thousand livres* which he had enjoyed, and which was divided between Gaillard and myself, as that of Batteux had been. My apartments at Versailles, as secretary to the Louvre and historiographer of France, were let for eighteen hundred livres.† I had a pension of a thousand crowns‡ on the *Mercure*. I had some of my funds advantageously employed in the enterprize of *l'Isle des Cygnes;* those which I had lodged in the customs of the city of Lyons yielded me legal interest, as well as those which lay in other hands. I saw myself therefore in a situation of living agreeably, both at Paris and in the country; and from that time I took upon myself all the expence of Grignon. My wife's mother, her cousin, and her uncles, had their apartments when they chose to come; but it was to my house that they came.

* Nearly eighty guineas.
† About seventy guineas. ‡ £125.

I indulged myself in a carriage, which thrice a week conveyed me, in an hour and a half, from my country house to the Louvre, and brought me back after the sitting of the academy, from the Louvre to my country house.

From that time till the era of the revolution, I cannot express the delight which I found in life and society. My wife had been happily delivered of her fourth child; M. and Madame d'Angiviller had stood godfather and godmother: they had made it a kind of holiday; and had given us, on this occasion, the warmest and most tender proofs of friendship. Charles, their godson, became as dear to them as if he had been their own child.

Soon after, we were happy enough to acquire another society of friends in M. and Madame de Seze. In that lady my wife found every thing which can be attractive in an amiable character: accordingly they soon felt that inclination which arises from the congeniality of two amiable and virtuous hearts. With respect

to M. de Seze, I do not believe there is a man in the world whose company is more desirable. An unaffected, lively, amusing gaiety; a natural eloquence, which, even in the most familiar conversation, flowed copiously and spontaneously; a readiness, a correctness of thought and expression, which resembled inspiration; and, better than all, an open heart, full of rectitude, sensibility, goodness, and candour—such was the man, whose friendship the Abbé Maury had long taught me to desire, and whom the vicinity of our country houses soon made my friend.

From Brevane, where, in summer, De Seze spent his leisure hours; from Brevane, I say, to Grignon, we had only to pass the Seine, and the plain which it waters; our two rising grounds faced each other. A young man whom we loved, and who loved us both, acquainted us with the mutual desire which each felt to become acquainted with the other. As soon as we met, the immediate effect

was to make us fond of one another, and desirous of meeting again; and distant as we now are, this attachment continues the same. On my side, at least, nothing during my solitude has more occupied or interested my mind. De Seze is one of those singular men, of whom we may say, 'You must love him if you did not love him before; if you love him once, you must love him always.'—*Cras amet, qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.* (Catul.)

The young man, who had taken care to make us acquainted, was Laborie, who, from the age of nineteen, has made himself known by writings which might readily be ascribed to the maturity of understanding and taste: a new friend, who, prompted by spontaneous inclination, had offered himself to me, and whom I had soon taught to esteem and love me.

In this amiable and happy character, the desire of becoming useful is a habitual and ruling passion. Full of ardour for every thing which wears the appear-

ance of virtue, the rapidity of his action equals that of his thoughts. I never knew any one so economical of time; he divides it by minutes, and every instant is employed usefully, either for himself, or still oftener for his friends.

The change of ministers was likewise attended with some improvement of my fortune.

The appointment of historiographer of France, which had formerly been a thousand crowns, had, by some sort of wretched economy, been reduced to eighteen hundred livres.* D'Ormesson, the comptroller-general, thought proper to replace it on its ancient footing.

It is well known that M. de Calonne, on coming to this office, declared his contempt for mean parsimony. He particularly wished that the labours of literary men should be honourably rewarded. In my character of perpetual secretary to the French academy, he begged me to call on him. He expressed his intention

* About seventy guineas.

of treating the academy well; and asked, if there were any pensions attached to it, as to the academies of sciences and belles lettres. I replied that there were none. He asked me what the daily fees might amount to in the case of those who gave the most constant attendance: I assured him that they could not exceed eight or nine hundred livres * a year, being only thirty sous† each. He promised to double the amount. He wished to know what was the salary of the secretary; I replied, that it was twelve hundred livres.‡ He thought it too little. He therefore prevailed upon the king to raise the fee to three livres, § and the secretary's salary to a thousand crowns. ‖ My revenue from the academy might thus amount to four thousand five hundred livres ¶ a year.

I obtained also a new degree of favour and new hopes, under the ministry of M. de Lamoignon, the keeper of the seals. The occasion was as follows.

* £35 or £40 † 2s. ‡ £50
§ 2s. 6d. ‖ £125 ¶ About £200

One of the objects of this minister was to reform the institutions for public instruction, and to render it flourishing. But as he himself did not possess the knowledge requisite for forming a plan of study which might fulfil his intentions, he consulted the Abbé Maury, for whom he entertained much friendship and esteem. The latter, not thinking himself sufficiently acquainted with the subjects to which he had not specially attended, advised him to apply to me, and the minister begged that he would ask me to call upon him. In the conversations which we had together, I saw that, upon the whole, he had conceived his design like a statesman, and had taken a full view of its extent. But he was not sufficiently acquainted with the difficulties and details. That we might both be assured if I had perfectly understood his plan, I begged that he would allow me to explain it in a memorial which I should lay before him: but I observed to him, that nothing appeared to me more to be dreaded in all reforms,

than the ambition of destroying and changing every thing; that I felt much respect for ancient institutions; that I paid a willing deference to the lessons of experience; and that I viewed past errors and abuses as weeds, which mix with the wheat, but which must be extirpated with a light and careful hand, lest we should injure the harvest. . . .

My memorial was divided into eight principal articles: the distribution of the schools, and the subjects of instruction, which were to be adapted either to general or to local objects; the establishments to be made with a view to both of these objects; the discipline; the method; the gradations, and the exact correspondence of the remote schools to their central points of superintendance; the mode of encouragement; the means of knowing and employing those men who should be formed by this mode of instruction.

In the general aspect, and in the details of this vast composition, my model

had been the institutions of the Jesuits, in which all were subjected to a single rule, superintended and governed by a central authority, and moved by a common principle of action. But we wanted that bond of union which subsists in a religious society, as well as the spirit which animates it; and the great difficulty was to find a principle of interest and emulation, which might dispose men to yield a willing obedience. For this institution ought to rest upon the morals and discipline to be established among the masters, as well as among the scholars. It was necessary, therefore, that the places should be desirable, not only in their present state, but in the prospects and hopes which they held out; and, in order that exclusion or dismissal might be a punishment, I required that perseverance in these honourable functions should be attended with progressive and certain advantages.

The Keeper of the seals approved of my plan in all its parts; and with regard

to the necessity of rewards, he assured me that they should not be spared. 'No professor,' said he, 'no man of merit, shall grow old in obscurity; no scholar, who has distinguished himself in his course of study, shall remain unemployed. You engage to let me know of the best talents which are to be found, from one extremity of the kingdom to another; and I undertake to find situations for them. I see,' continued he, squeezing my hand, 'that we understand each other; we shall agree together: I depend upon you, Marmontel; and you, in like manner, may depend upon me for me.'

As the Abbé Maury had assured me that the keeper of the seals was a frank and upright man, I made no difficulty in entering into the engagement which he proposed, and thought that, by completing and extending his plan, I should be labouring for his glory.

I had formed an acquaintance in the country, which assisted me greatly in this employment.

Lewis, the fifth of my children, was newly born, and his mother was nursing him. Albert, the eldest of the three who remained, was in his ninth year; Charles had just completed his fourth, when I formed the resolution of educating them at home; and in consequence of the reputation of the college of Saint-Barbe, I applied to it for a preceptor, who had been inured to the manners and discipline of the house, which was as much celebrated for its laborious and frugal manner of living, as for the superior manner in which studies were carried on in this school.

Charpentier, the excellent young man whom I received, and of whom death has deprived me, was constantly praising Saint-Barbe. For this house was singularly noted for the tender affection with which it was always regarded by those who had left it. He never spoke without enthusiasm of the manners, the discipline, and the studies of Saint-Barbe. He always expressed a profound esteem for the su-

periors of the house, and for the professors who still continued there. They were his friends; he expressed a desire to make them mine. I allowed him to introduce them, and received them with a cordiality which made them find my country house agreeable.

A branch of the school of Saint-Barbe had been established at Gentilly, a village in the vicinity of Grignon. The superiors, the professors of both houses, sometimes came together, and dined with me. They took an interest in the studies of my children. On the days when the young school of Gentilly had public exercises, my children were invited, and were admitted to the examination. This supplied them with a good example, and a subject of emulation. But to me it was a source of observation and instruction; for I naturally inquired into the cause of the easy and natural manner in which the studies of this school were carried on, and the cause could be no other than a good and steady arrangement.

I made most particular inquiries upon this subject; and by means of these conferences, I thought myself in a capacity of putting the last hand to my plan of national instruction, when, all of a sudden, by one of those changes which were constantly taking place in the ministry, M. de Lamoignon was removed and exiled to Bayille.

Interest and anxiety about public affairs, and about the fate of the nation, soon took full possession of my mind; my private life changed its aspect, and assumed a colouring which will necessarily be diffused over the rest of my memoirs.

BOOK XII.

I AM not writing the history of the revolution. *Quæ contentio divina et humana cuncta permiscuit, eoque vecordiæ processit, uti studiis civilibus bellum finem faceret.* (Sallust. Jug.) But if the life of man is a journey, can I relate mine without describing the dreadful accidents, the torrents, the abysses, the regions haunted by tigers and serpents, through which I have passed? For thus it is, that I remember the ten years of our misfortunes, almost doubting if it is not a wild and terrible dream.

This dreadful calamity will be everywhere described in characters of blood: its recollections are such as it will be but

too impossible to efface. But we cannot too carefully investigate its causes; for, in the diseases of the body politic, as in those of the human body, we must ascend to their source, before we can judge with probability how they will terminate, or how they might have been avoided; and the past may thus throw light upon the future.

Though for a long time the situation of public affairs, and the fermentation of men's minds, through all ranks of the state, appeared to threaten the approach of some great crisis, it is nevertheless true, that it happened only through the imprudence of those who obstinately persisted in thinking it impossible.

The nation, always faithful to its laws, to its king, to its ancient constitution, instinctively content with that portion of freedom, of prosperity, and of glory, which it enjoyed, was never weary of hoping for some salutary amendment of the vices and errors of the old administration.

This hope had been particularly enlivened by the accession of Lewis XVI to the throne. And then, indeed, if the wishes of a young king, full of candour and uprightness, had been seconded as they ought to have been, the whole might have been repaired without any convulsion.

Lewis XVI came to the throne at the age of twenty; full of a sentiment which is most valuable, so long as it is moderate, but very dangerous when it becomes excessive—distrust of himself. The fault of his education had been directly the reverse of that for which the education of princes is usually blamed; he had been too much intimidated; and as long as his elder brother, the duke of Normandy, lived, he had been made too sensible of the superiority which that prince, whose capacity was certainly premature, possessed over him in point of understanding.

The dauphin was thus in the anxious and perplexed situation of a man who feels his destiny and his duty, but who

dares not hope to be capable of fulfilling them, when he saw himself suddenly burdened with the government of an empire. His first feeling was fear, on finding himself a king at twenty; the first thing he did was to seek a man whose wisdom and ability might enlighten and guide him. Such men are always rare; and the young king asked the advice of his family with respect to a choice which was then perhaps more difficult than ever. Nothing could be more important, both for the nation and himself, than the step which should be the result of this deliberation. His political education was to be begun, his views to be directed, his mind to be formed; and nature had completely disposed him to receive good impressions. His understanding was solid, his soul uncorrupted, [illegible] and feeling, free from vice, [illegible] contempt for pomp and luxury, of hatred for falsehood and flattery, of love for justice and truth. His manners indeed might be a little blunt and

rude, but he possessed that rectitude and moral goodness which is the basis of virtue. In a word, this king of twenty, superior to all selfish considerations, was disposed to adopt every measure that was just and good; and around him was a kingdom, every part of which called for reform. The greatest good was to be done, and the greatest evil to be repaired: such was the prospect which awaited the man whom Lewis XVI should choose for his confident and guide. He chose the Count de Maurepas, (May 1774).

Maurepas, after a ministry of thirty years, and a long exile, [illegible] a still longer period of disgrace under the deceased king, for a very slight fault, at which the royal family had never felt any displeasure. In his retreat, he had acquired that respect which is granted to age, and to unmerited misfortune, supported with dignity. His former ministry had been distinguished only by the ruin of the navy; but as the timid policy of Cardinal Fleury had palsied this part of our

forces, the negligence of Maurepas might have been a matter of necessity; and in a subordinate place, where he was under no necessity of being a statesman, he had only to display his natural qualities, the agreeable manners of a man of the world, and the talents of a courtier.

He was superficial and incapable of any profound and serious application, but endowed with that quickness of perception which instantly penetrates into the most complicated part of business. In council, his habitual dexterity supplied the want of study and meditation. As courteous, as [illegible], as his father had been harsh and blunt; his mind was pliant, flexible, full of stratagems to attack, of address to defend himself, of subterfuges to elude, of quick turns to shift a subject at will, of witticisms whose pleasantry might disconcert the serious, of expedients to extricate himself from a slippery and difficult position; his eye instantaneously seized whatever was weak and ridiculous in men; with imperceptible art he drew

them into his snare, or led them on to his purpose; with an art still more formidable, he could throw ridicule on every thing, even on merit itself, when he wished to undervalue it. All these arts, joined to that of enlivening, of simplifying the labour of the cabinet, rendered Maurepas the most seducing of ministers. Had nothing more been wanting than to teach the young king how to handle affairs lightly and skilfully, to laugh at men and things, and to turn the duty of reigning into an amusement, Maurepas would have been, beyond all comparison, the man to be chosen. Hopes had been perhaps entertained, that age and misfortune might have rendered his character more firm, more steady, and more energetic. But he was naturally feeble, indolent, selfish; loved his own comfort and repose; wished his old age to be respected, but peaceful; shunned whatever could make his suppers dull, or his sleep restless; he hardly believed in the reality of difficult virtues, and regarded a pure at-

tachment to the public good, as mere ostentation or hypocrisy; cared little for rendering his ministry splendid, and made the art of government consist in managing every thing quietly, by adopting always temporary expedients, rather than adhering to fixed principles. Maurepas therefore was in old age what he had been in his youth, an agreeable man, quite taken up with himself, and uniting the characters of minister and courtier.

A watchful attention to preserve his ascendant over the mind of the king, and his predominance in the councils, made him easily become jealous, even of those whom he himself had chosen; and this uneasiness was the only active passion of his soul. In other respects, there was no spring, no vigour, either for doing good or evil; but weakness without kindness, malice without atrocity, resentment without anger, carelessness for a future with which he would have nothing to do. He might perhaps be sincerely desirous

of the public good, when he could bring it about with perfect security to himself; but this desire was cooled the moment he saw either his credit or his repose in danger. Such was always the character of this old man, who had been given to the young king as his guide and adviser.

As it was easy for him to see that frankness and kindness formed the groundwork of the character of this prince, he studied, in the first place, to appear kind and frank. The king made no secret to him of that excessive timidity which had been left by the first impressions of childhood. He perceived, therefore, that the surest mode of gaining his kindness, was to make those duties which now terrified him appear easy. He employed his talent of simplifying affairs, in order to render their burden lighter. But, whether it was that he regarded inveterate evils as now past remedy, whether his indolence and levity prevented him from discovering them, or whether he neglected them

as maladies arising from an excess of strength and health, and perhaps as constitutional vices inherent in the body politic. He did not allow the young king to trouble his mind with them, but assured him that all things would go on well, provided they were wisely and moderately directed. The excuse of Cardinal Fleury for his pusillanimous anxiety, was, that an edifice which had lasted more than thirteen hundred years, must bend to its fall, and that while we propped it up, there was a danger of shaking it: on the contrary the pretence of Maurepas for his indolence was, that a kingdom so vigorously constituted would be easily restored by its natural strength, and that it might therefore be allowed to subsist with its faults and abuses.

But the bad state of the finances is not an evil which can be long palliated or dissembled; want of money, and loss of credit, soon bear witness against the minister who conceals and neglects them; and so long as the true remedy has not

been found, it grows always worse instead of better.

The Abbé Terrai had been given to Lewis XV as an able minister. Twenty years spent in a court of law, amid a multitude of discontented clients, had hardened him against complaint; he was not much less hardened against censure, and thought himself bound by his profession to be the object of public hatred. Maurepas removed him, and appointed in his place Turgot, a man alike distinguished for understanding and virtue.

The latter was deeply sensible that a reduction of expence, economy in collecting the revenue, the abolition of privileges burdensome to commerce and agriculture, and a more equal distribution of taxes through the different classes of the people, were the true remedies which must be applied to the great malady of the state, and of this he found it easy to convince a king who breathed nothing but justice and love for his people. But Maurepas, now seeing that this esteem and confi-

dence of the young king for his new minister was going too far, became jealous of his own work, and hastened to destroy it.

In a country, where so many persons live by abuses and disorders, a man who introduced regularity and economy into the finances, a man whom no credit could bend or favour corrupt, must necessarily have as enemies all those whose requests he either refused, or was ever likely to refuse. Turgot was too proud and too candid to descend to court intrigues: his demeanour was severe, and he was said to want address; and when ridicule, which with us sinks the value of every thing, had once seized upon him, Maurepas perceived that his ruin would be easily accomplished. He began with listening, with encouraging by a smile the ill-natured remarks of the courtiers. His next step was to own, that the views of Turgot were rather those of a theoretical reasoner than of a real man of business; that the public opinion had

been mistaken with respect to the ability of this pretended sage; that his head was full of nothing but philosophical reveries and speculations, without any experience of business, any knowledge of men, any capacity for the management of finance, or any inventive powers for supplying the pressing exigencies of the state: he had a system of perfection which did not belong to this world, and was to be found only in books; a minute search after that ideal excellence which is never to be found; instead of the means of providing for present exigencies, vague and fantastical schemes for a distant futurity; a number of ideas, but these confused; great extent of knowledge, but foreign to the purpose of his ministry; the pride of Lucifer; and, along with his presumption, the most inflexible obstinacy.

These confidential observations of the old man, which were spread from mouth to mouth, that they might reach the king's ear, were the more successful from

not being absolutely devoid of plausibility. Turgot was surrounded by studious men, who had devoted themselves to economical science, and formed a kind of sect; the object of whose labours was doubtless valuable, but whose confident language, sententious tone, and sometimes chimerical notions, wrapt in an odd and obscure style, gave scope for raillery. Turgot associated with them, and expressed an esteem of which they themselves boasted too loudly, representing it as greater than it really was. It was not difficult, therefore, for his enemies to represent him as the head of the sect, and the ridicule attached to the name of economist fell upon him.

Besides, there is no doubt that Turgot, proud of the uprightness of his intentions, valued himself more on being dexterous in business, than on being pliant and engaging in his intercourse with the court; his address was mild and polite, but cold. You were sure of finding him just, but inflexible in his prin-

ciples; and interest and favour could not brook the immoveable tranquillity with which he rejected their applications.

Though in the course of two years, by means of economy and reduction of expenditure, he had considerably diminished the load of debt which pressed upon the treasury, he was still thought to treat the ruin of the finances and of public credit too much as a chronic malady. The wisdom of his arrangements, his prospects of improvement, the encouragement and the relief which he afforded to agriculture, the liberty which he restored to commerce and industry, offered only slow success and distant resources, whilst there were urgent wants which it was necessary to supply.

In his system of free trade, he admitted of no restriction and no limits; now, in the case of necessaries of life, even though this liberty should be attended only with momentary dangers, the risk of leaving a whole people in want of the means of subsistence, was not one which

could be incurred without uneasiness. The obstinacy of Turgot in withdrawing every kind of superintendance from the corn-trade, appeared to be too headstrong. This gave a mortal blow to his influence over the mind of the king.

During a popular disturbance which was excited in 1775, by the dearness of bread, the king, who still retained for Turgot that esteem of which Maurepas was jealous, placed his whole confidence in him, and left the affair entirely to his management. Turgot was not so prudent as to require, that Maurepas should be called to the secret council in which the king committed to him this sacred charge; and he was besides so imprudent as loudly to undertake to prove that the riot was prompted by high authority. Le Noir, the minister of police, was dismissed on suspicion of having acted in concert with the authors of this plot. Certain it is, that the plunder of the bakers' shops had been carried on without opposition. The riot went on also

in a systematic manner, which seemed to indicate a plan; nor would I venture to say, that Turgot was mistaken in the person to whom he ascribed it. The prince of Conti, a spendthrift who was always in want, and full of the old spirit of the *Fronde*, bustled in the parliament only that he might be dreaded at court; and being accustomed to a timid compliance with all his demands, could not but be offended by an unbending respect like that of Turgot. Possibly, therefore, he might wish, by a commotion among the people in the country and city, to spread a report of famine, to raise alarm, and thus destroy the king's favour for that troublesome minister, from whom he had nothing to expect. But whatever probability there might be in this cause of the disturbance, Turgot could not produce the proof which he had promised; this rash step determined his fall.

Maurepas gave the king to understand that this story of a pretended plot, was

only the pitiful excuse of a vain man, who would neither acknowledge nor correct his error; and that a systematic and obstinate head, which must have every thing its own way, was not suited to a place where every thing should be carefully calculated, and a judicious and conciliatory plan of conduct followed.

Turgot was dismissed in May 1776, and the finances given to Clugny, who appeared to have come only to make spoil with his jovial companions and his opera girls, and who died in the ministry after four or five months of impudent plunder, of which the king alone was ignorant. His place was supplied by Taboreau, who being an honest man, soon owned himself incapable of filling it. He acknowledged the superiority of a man who had been given him as a second, under the title of Director of the royal treasure. His retreat was dignified by modesty; and Necker succeeded him under the character of Director-general of

This Genevese, who has since been the sport of opinion, and celebrated in such a variety of ways, was then one of the most distinguished bankers of Europe. In this profession he enjoyed the public confidence, and a very extensive credit. He had produced proof of his talents; and his writings upon subjects connected with the ministry of finance had displayed a judicious and reflecting mind; but another merit which he had with Maurepas, was his hatred of Turgot. The cause of this hatred was as follows.

Turgot could not endure that commerce, industry, and agriculture, should be subjected to the restrictive system of Colbert; he considered it as a right inherent in property that every man should be at liberty to dispose as he pleased of his property and his talents; he wished that a man should be allowed to follow his private interest, being convinced that he would best promote it, and that from the reciprocal operation of private interests the general good would result. Necker

was more timid, and thought that, in almost every man, this individual interest stood in need of being guided and restrained; that, till it had received the lessons of experience, it would be advisable to supply the place of these by judicious regulations; that the care of the public good ought not to be entrusted to the care of private interest; that if, with a view to the safety and tranquillity of a whole nation, civil and moral liberty ought to be restrained and subjected to laws, it was just also that the liberty of commerce should be moderated, and even suspended, whenever the common safety was concerned: that the property of the necessaries of life did not so completely belong to individuals, as to give one part of the nation a right to let the other die of want; and that, while it would be unjust to keep down these articles at a low price, it would be equally so to allow them to rise to an excessive value; in short, that to allow the rich miser to impose too imperiously upon the poor the severe law of

necessity, would be placing the many at the mercy of the few, and that it was the wisdom and the duty of administration to hold the balance between them.

'Avarice,' said Turgot, 'will not be to be dreaded where liberty reigns; and the means of securing abundance is to allow commodities a free circulation. The corn will be sometimes dear, but labour will be dear also, and every thing will find its level.'

'When the price of corn rises gradually,' said Necker, 'doubtless it will regulate the price of industry, and no person will suffer; but when it rises suddenly to an excessive height, the people will have long to suffer before every thing find its level.'

Upon this system of superintendence and moderate liberty Necker had composed the eulogy of Colbert, and this eulogy had met with success. It was a double crime, which Turgot could not forgive. This zealot for the freedom of commerce and industry thought his op-

nion infallible; and viewing it always as self-evident, he considered the man who did not yield to it as insincere.

Till then, however, the principles of Necker had not been made public; but, when Turgot issued his edict allowing the free exportation of corn, not only from province to province, but to foreign parts, and at all times, Necker could not forbear saying, that it appeared to him somewhat dangerous, and that he would have a few observations to communicate to him upon this branch of commerce, which might, perhaps, deserve his attention. These words rekindled the antipathy of Turgot against the system of restrictive laws. He replied, that his opinion upon that subject was unalterable; but that every one, notwithstanding, was at liberty to express and publish his opinion.

Necker replied, that such had not been his intention; but that, since permission was given to him, he might, perhaps, make use of it. Some time after appeared his

book upon the laws concerning the corn trade; and immediately upon the publication of this book, the riot which I have mentioned took place. Turgot had no doubt that the one had contributed to the other, although he might have known that the populace, when they pillage bakers' shops, do not apply to books for advice.

The friends of Turgot, more incensed than himself, proposed that he should punish Necker by banishing him to Geneva; he had it in his power, for he was still in full possession of the king's confidence. His uprightness and justice saved him from this shame; but he preserved till death his hatred against a man, who had injured him only by accepting his challenge, and combating his opinion.

The moment that Necker took the administration of finance into his hands, his first care and employment was to unravel the chaos in which it was plunged. Clugny had left an annual deficit of

twenty-four millions,* which appeared then enormous; yet it was necessary that it should be supplied. Necker found means of doing this. These means consisted, on one side, in regulating the collection of the public money, and clearing the channel through which it flowed; on the other, in discovering the manner in which it was misapplied, and in reforming abuses.

Nothing prevented the king from being as economical as his minister, except his too kind and easy disposition. It was with a view, therefore, of guarding against perpetual seductions, that Necker prevailed upon him to suspend, till the end of each year, the confirmation of the favours which he should incline to bestow, in order that he might see the whole amount before distributing it.

Thus Necker, by means of economy alone, was about to secure a surplus which would have enabled him to relieve the public treasury; when the signal of

* £1,000,000 sterling.

war informed him, that he would need more copious resources to form immediately a respectable navy, as well as to arm and equip it. These urgent expences would amount annually to upwards of an hundred and fifty millions.* It was by credit alone that he could look them in the face, and credit was gone; the bad faith of administration had ruined it during a period of peace; yet he must either restore it or sink; for even the most burdensome taxes cannot supply the exigences of an expensive war; and England, our enemy, was then able to borrow two or three hundred millions at a moderate interest. Necker has since been censured for his loans; but this censure ought to have been directed against the war which rendered them indispensable, and which might itself have been dispensed with.

Necker's art of raising and supporting public credit, was to afford ground of confidence by stating the resources se-

* Upwards of £6,000,000 sterling.

cured by his economy, and thereby shewing a solid and sure foundation for the loans which he was to open. The same economical plan, which he had marked out during peace, was sufficient to procure those funds which the war required. It was well known that he had constantly under his eye complete and precise statements of the situation of the finances, and that in every operation, if the expression may be used, he had scales in his hands, so as never to make his engagements exceed his resources. By means of this spirit of order, after finding credit destroyed at the end of fifteen years peace, he was able to restore it amid a war which demanded the greatest efforts. Notwithstanding the deficit of 1776, notwithstanding the expences of this war, and loans to the amount of four hundred and twelve millions,* which had been made for its support, he was able, in the account which he delivered to the king in 1781, to state that the ordinary

* £17,000,000 sterling.

revenues then exceeded, by ten millions two hundred thousand livres,* the annual and ordinary expences. The English were thus warned, that, without any new tax, and even without any new retrenchment, France would still have funds sufficient for two campaigns; since a free revenue of ten millions was sufficient to pay the interest of two hundred millions.† This information was very capable of producing a good peace; yet Necker was not the less accused of vanity in publishing the account.

In an able minister, this manner of openly disclosing his operations and the state of affairs, is doubtless attended with many advantages, and its success is infallible among a nation which is capable of thought and application. But, with a thoughtless people, who, without examination, judge men and things upon mere report, this method had its dangers, and Necker ought to have foreseen them. There is no safety in taking such a public

* £400,000. † £8,000,000.

for our judge, except when the subjects which we place under their eyes, possess the most palpable certainty; now, to the multitude financial statements will never attain this degree of evidence. No one, in our gay circles, chooses to grow pale over calculations. It is very easy, therefore, to shake the public opinion of the exactness of an account; and, as soon as the doubt arises, it is a cloud which malignity never fails to swell. Necker, while he did a thing exemplary to future ministers, satisfactory to the king, imposing towards England, encouraging to the nation, animating to public credit,—did a thing which was very bold and very dangerous to himself.

Every article which this account contained was confirmed and supported by vouchers. Public opinion seemed even to dispense with their production, and its first burst was completely in his favour.

But as soon as a man was found bold enough to attack him, this aggressor met

with a cordial reception from envy and malignity. In a memorial, he accused Necker's account as incorrect, and this memorial went from hand to hand, the more eagerly sought after from being in manuscript. An economical minister is never in want of enemies: Necker had multitudes, and some of these were powerful. Maurepas, without declaring himself, rallied them round him; and here we have an instance of one of those wretched interests of vanity to which the destiny of states is so often attached.

Maurepas was president of the council of finance; now in the account in which Necker laid open the situation of the finances with so much honour to himself, Maurepas was not named. This silence appeared injurious to the old minister: he said nothing, but did not forgive it.

Another grievance was the disgrace of a minister, the creature of Maurepas, or rather of his wife. His dismissal was procured by Necker. Maurepas, who never

had any excuse for allowing himself to be governed by women, was yet in subjection to his own wife. That continual complaisance which is the adulation of every instant, and which is so particularly agreeable in old age and adversity, had subdued him, as love would have done. He had formed a habit of loving and hating whatever was loved or hated by the companion of his disgrace; and Sartines was one of the men for whom the Countess de Maurepas had the greatest affection.

Sartines, formerly lieutenant of police, possessed circumspection, pliancy, discretion, all the little talents which belong to mediocrity; but, between the obscure detail of the police of Paris, and the ministry of marine amid the dangers of a naval war, the distance was tremendous. Sartines had never acquired the least of the knowledge which was requisite for this great office; so that if there was a man who could be opposed to the English admiralty in the midst of

this war, which embraced both worlds, most certainly it was not he. The ill success of our operations corresponded to the total incapacity of the person who directed them; there was no plan, no union, no concert; enormous expences, disastrous defeats; fleets issuing from our harbours only to become the prey of the enemy. Our commerce and colonies abandoned, our convoys taken, our squadrons destroyed; and, without mentioning the irreparable loss of our sailors, and the ruin of our dock-yards, upwards of a huudred millions* of extraordinary expences thrown every year into the sea, from which we saw ourselves shamefully driven, notwithstanding the devoted bravery of our sailors; such were the rights of Sartines to be supported by Maurepas.

Necker, who was grieved at the deplorable use that was made of so much treasure, and at seeing the fortune and glory of a great nation thrown into such hands, did not the less redouble his ef-

*£4,200,000.

forts to supply the necessities of the war, and to support its weight. He had agreed with Sartines that, beside the sums which he annually drew from the royal treasure, the latter, on urgent occasions, might borrow from the treasurer of the navy, to the extent of five or six millions; and he trusted that the minister was keeping strictly within these limits, when he learned from the treasurer himself that, in obedience to his order, he had advanced to the amount of twenty-four millions,* payable at three months. This was like a thunderbolt to the director of finance; for, as he had taken no steps to provide for an engagement of which he had been kept ignorant, the term of payment was at hand without his knowing how to answer it. He provided for the emergency; but, whether the conduct of Sartines arose from bad intention, or only from imprudence, Necker thought it no longer safe to be connected with such a man: he com-

* £1,000,000.

plained to the king, and positively demanded either his own dismissal or that of Sartines.

Maurepas was detained at Paris by the gout. The king, before forming any resolution, wrote and asked his advice. 'When he received the king's letter,' said the Duke de Nivernois to me, 'his wife and I were sitting by his bed-side. He read it to us. The determination was long delayed; but at length he himself, forming his resolution, said, 'We must sacrifice Sartines; we cannot do without Necker.'

The king, on dismissing Sartines, consulted Necker with regard to his successor; and Necker mentioned the Marshal de Castries. It is well known how much reason the management and final issue of the war gave to applaud this choice. The old minister became only the more jealous, and his closet was thenceforth a kind of centre of action to the party that was hostile to Necker. That party thought themselves also protected by the royal brothers.

However cautious the conduct of Necker towards those princes was, they had been suspected of considering it as too rigid; but what was still more true, its strictness was displeasing to their creatures; and exchanges, cessions, sales, all the affairs which men in power were accustomed to transact with the king, had to fear, in this director of the finances, a severe and clear-sighted censor, from whom they all longed to be free.

There were no more snares to be laid for the easy disposition of the king, no more favours secretly and skilfully snatched; in particular there was no longer a possibility of concealing in the corners, as it were, of the ministerial portfolio, the secret articles of a lease, of a contract, or of a privilege; nor did the obscure windings of the financial labyrinth afford the means of securing clandestine profits. The man who struck at the root of so many abuses could not but be hated. The memorial, therefore, which accused

him of imposing upon the king, was warmly supported.

Far be it from me to throw upon the royal brothers the slightest suspicion of having wished to favour the calumny. But falsehood, in their eyes, could assume the colouring of truth, in the same manner as the most contemptible interests had assumed the colouring of zeal.

Bourboulon, the author of the memorial, and treasurer to the Count d'Artois, had made himself agreeable to that prince. Proud, therefore, of his protection, he raised his head; and owning himself the accuser of Necker, he defied him to answer. So much assurance had an air of truth, which imposed upon the public. Many persons could with difficulty believe that Necker had so suddenly, and so wonderfully changed the situation of the finances; and, without treating the specious account which he had given as a crime, they thought that this account had been artfully drawn up, with a view to support public credit, and

to hold forth the means of continuing the war, and rendering peace more easy to be obtained. Maurepas listened to this opinion with a significant look, which seemed to applaud the penetration of those who could guess so well.

But Necker thought it his duty not to be satisfied with such an apology, and being incapable of compounding with public opinion on the subject of his honour, he asked the king to allow him to lay before him, in presence of his ministers, the memorial of Bourboulon, and to answer to each separate article. The king consented: and Maurepas, Miromesnil, Vergennes, three enemies of Necker, were present at this examination. The memorial was read, and its falsehood proved from one end to the other, by papers which ascertained the situation of the finances, and of which the account presented to the king was only a disclosure.

In answer to these incontestable proofs, the three ministers could not produce

the shadow of a doubt; but when the king asked confidentially of Maurepas what he thought of these calculations, and of this financial account, 'Sire,' replied the old courtier, 'it appears to me as full of truth as of modesty.'

After this examination, it followed of course, either that the false accusation must be punished, or that Necker must be suspected of having failed in defending himself. He had despised the injurious libels which attacked only his person; but ought he to neglect in like manner that which decried his administration? The more the king's justice was acknowledged, the more impossible it must be believed that Bourboulon should continue to be endured in the prince's household, if he was convicted of lying and calumny. Now, after this conviction, he remained in his office, and appeared everywhere, even at royal suppers.

In this crisis, upon which I dwell on account of the fatal consequences which

were about to follow from the resolution of Necker, he had three parts to act; one was, to trust more to his own reputation, to overlook and endure every thing till the death of Maurepas, which was not far distant; another, to defend himself by merely getting printed upon two columns the memorial of Bourboulon and the statements which gave the lie to this calumnious memorial; lastly, to demand from the king that his accuser, as being convicted of calumny, should be punished. The first would have been the advice given him by the most judicious. 'Why did he not wait?' said the Duke de Nivernois to me after the death of Maurepas, 'patience for six months would have saved us. Peace would have come, and the restoration of the finances by a good economist under the best of kings, would have enabled us to enjoy long his reign and his virtues.' The second too would have been a rational line of conduct; for when the public had the proofs under

their eyes, the truth would have been evident, and the detractor confounded. But pretended friends of Necker thought it unworthy of him to enter the lists with such an antagonist. He ought, in my opinion, either to have despised or encountered him. He demanded his punishment. It is true that he was every day threatened with libels still more atrocious and more infamous, and if an example should not be made of Bourboulon, it was impossible that Necker, abandoned by the hatred of the old minister to the insolence and rage of a faction supported by authority, should not lose at least a part of that respect on which his credit rested. It was for the support of this credit, this powerful opinion, without which he could do nothing, that he demanded as the sole punishment the dismissal of his detractor from the household of the Count d'Artois. The reply of Maurepas was, that he asked what was impossible. 'Then,' urged Necker, 'the king himself must bear witness to the truth by

some mark of the confidence with which he honours me,' and he demanded admission into the council of state. He thought it, indeed, a great evil, that in this council, where subjects most connected with the situation of the finances were canvassed, the minister of finance should not have full right of admittance. But Maurepas viewed, or pretended to view this demand, as arising only from a preposterous vanity. 'What,' said he, 'you admitted to the council, who do not go to mass!' 'My lord,' replied Necker, 'this reason does not hold good. Sully did not go to mass, yet Sully was admitted to the council.' In this reply Maurepas noticed only the foolish vanity of comparing himself to Sully; and, instead of the council, offered to ask his admission into the cabinet.* Necker openly treated this offer as a mockery, and asked leave to resign.

This was a thing expected with the most eager impatience in the drawing-

* See Note (2) at the end.

room of Maurepas, and of which his niece, the Marchioness of Flamarens, made no secret. But he, pretending not to consent to what he desired most, refused to lay Necker's resignation before the king, and said to him at last, that it must be put into the queen's hands, if he was finally determined to give it in.

The queen, who listened to him with favour, and expressed esteem for him, was sensible of the loss which the king was about to suffer; and seeing that Necker persisted in his resolution, she required him to take at least twenty-four hours to reflect maturely upon it.

Necker consulted his own mind, recollected the good which he had done, thought of that which he might still do, anticipated the bitter regret which he might feel after renouncing it. Thinking it impossible that an old man, on the brink of the tomb, should be obstinately unjust towards him, he resolved to see him once more.

'Sir,' said he, 'if the king really

wishes to express his satisfaction with my services, he may give me a proof which will only supply me with new means of serving him; I mean the direction of the contracts for the army and navy.' 'What you ask,' said Maurepas, 'would offend the two ministers.' 'I do not think so,' replied Necker; 'yet, after all, so much the worse for the minister, who, in examining expences which it is impossible for him to estimate himself, should envy me a labour which he leaves to his clerks.' The last words of the one were, that the thing could not be mentioned; the last resolution of the other was, to go and intreat the queen to get his resignation accepted. The queen received it, and the king gave his consent. Such is the source whence all our misfortunes have flowed. We shall soon see them swell and overflow in torrents, till they plunge us into the deepest ruin.

It may appear not very probable that the king should so readily deprive him-

self of an able man, who had served him so well. But his favourable opinion of him was impaired by artful and treacherous insinuations. Necker was represented to him as a man full of pride, of inexorable pride. His enemies said, they had attempted to make him sensible, that even supposing errors of calculation in the memorial of Bourboulon, these errors were not crimes; that there was no sufficient ground for requiring that a prince, a brother of the king, should disgrace, by dismissal, a man who belonged to him, because he had displeased a minister of finance; but nothing could appease him. They had offered to demand for him, and to obtain from his majesty a privilege which was considered as honourable by the highest nobility, admission into the cabinet; but he had treated it with disdain. Thinking himself necessary, he pretended to give law; he compared himself to Sully, and asked nothing else than to rule in the councils, to superintend all the ministers, in a

word, to sit on the throne by the side of his majesty.

The disinterestedness with which Necker had chosen to serve the state, contributed also to make him be considered as a stern republican, who wished to oblige without lying under any obligations; and, if I may be allowed to express my own opinion, Necker, when refusing as he did the emoluments of his office, might have expected malignant comments to be made upon a pride which was mortifying to all those who had not, and could not have it.

In short, that the king might feel no regret on account of the dismissal of Necker, they had found means to convince him, that if it was an evil, it was one that could not be avoided.

One of Necker's schemes is well known to have been the establishment of provincial assemblies throughout the kingdom. Now, in order to make the king sensible of the advantage of these assemblies, Necker, in a memorial which

he had read when they were together, and which was intended for the king alone, had shewn on one side the inconveniencies of the arbitrary power entrusted to intendants, and the manner in which it was abused by their subaltern agents; on the other, the advantage which the king would derive from a more immediate intercourse with his people, so as to depend less on the mediation of parliaments. This memorial, having been secretly obtained and published at the same time that Bourboulon was circulating his, displeased the magistracy, and gave them such a dislike to Necker as enabled the old minister to persuade the king that Necker had entirely lost the confidence of the parliaments; that bodies of men never forgive; that he, who had once offended them, would find them ever after quite unmanageable; that this misunderstanding was a hydra which must be incessantly combated; that Necker himself was sensible of it, and that, while he retired upon other pre-

tences, he was sensible that his place was no longer tenable.

A remarkable circumstance, which would be alone sufficient to shew the thoughtlessness of Maurepas, is, that when he returned into his drawing-room, quite happy at the departure of Necker, his friends having asked whom he would appoint in his place, he owned that he had never thought on the subject. I was told by my niece, that the Cardinal de Rohan happening to be there by chance, mentioned Fleuri; and Fleuri was named.

This old counsellor of state, an acute, pliant, insinuating character, was recommended by his connections and alliances in the magistracy; this, in the eyes of Maurepas, was a considerable advantage; for, as he considered the finances only as a war, to be carried on between the court and the parliament, the ablest comptroller-general for him would be the man who could most readily prevail upon them to pass the edicts.* He had made

* See Note (3) at the end.

it a grand object to acquire the favour of the parliaments, and he wished that after his example, a minister of finance should treat them with that address which obtains by gentle means, what authority could with difficulty command.

Fleuri, in this respect, answered his expectation very well. He obtained, without obstacle, the passing of fifty millions* of taxes. Necker had left them upwards of two hundred millions† in the royal coffers. This was more than necessary to place an able and respected minister in easy circumstances; but even with these aids Fleuri got into difficulties, for want of that credit which public esteem grants only to integrity.

Six months after the death of Maurepas Fleuri was dismissed; and the king, that he might at least have an honest man at the head of the finances, appointed d'Ormesson.

The latter, unhappily, had nothing but honesty. He had no talents, no knowledge of finance, and no invention. As-

* £2,100,000. † Above £8,000,000.

sailed by want, urged by men in power, and reduced to the alternative of either withdrawing or maintaining himself by unworthy complaisance, he wavered not in his choice, and chose, rather than degrade himself, to descend from the ministry with his integrity unimpaired.

A post so slippery, from which every man fell, might, one would think, have intimidated the ambition of candidates; yet this passion became only the more ardent; nor was there a man of intrigue in any of the avenues of favour, who, if he possessed the slightest knowledge of business, did not aspire at filling the place of him who had fallen.

Amid this crowd, a man of ingenuity and talents distinguished himself: it was Calonne. He had resorted to means of success, the more singular from their simplicity. Far from concealing his ambition, he had published it; and instead of the austerity with which some of his predecessors had armed themselves, he had employed every means of making

himself agreeable, especially to women; he was known by them as the most obliging of men, and when he confided his views to such as were in power, he was lavish of every hope which could gain him their votes. Accordingly, they never ceased to extol his information, his ability, his genius. His manner towards men was little less engaging, in consequence of an easy and natural politeness, which marked distinctions without making them offensive; and by an air of good will, which seemed favourable to every man's ambition. At every new change he was called upon by the unanimous voice of the higher circles. At last he was named, and on his arrival at Fontainbleau, where the court was, you would have said that he held in his hand the horn of abundance; it was a kind of triumph (November 3, 1783).

At first, thinking himself at a fountain of inexhaustible wealth, and never calculating either the wants or the expences which awaited him, but intoxicated with

his prosperity, in which he expected soon to see that of the state, he despised all foresight, and neglected all economy, as unworthy of a powerful king. Convinced that the first art of a man of power was the art of pleasing, he trusted to favour for his fortune; and studied only to render himself agreeable to those who sought to become formidable in order to sell their favour. He thus saw himself suddenly surrounded with praise and vain glory. People talked of nothing but the graces of his address and the charms of his language. It was in order to paint his character, that the expression of *formes elegantes** was borrowed from the arts; and *l'obligeance*, a new word, seemed invented for him. The ministry of finance was said never to have been filled with so much gaiety, ease, and dignity. The readiness with which he dispatched business astonished every person, and the gaiety with which he treated the most serious matters made him be admired as a man of prodigious

* Elegant forms.

capacity. Even those, in short, who ventured to doubt if he was the best of ministers, were forced to acknowledge that he was the most delightful. It was published that he did business with the king in such a manner as to make it a mere amusement: there was nothing thorny, nothing laborious, no difficulty for the present, no anxiety for the future. The king was at ease, and every one was satisfied; till, at the end of three years and a few months of this brilliant and smiling administration, the fatal secret was disclosed, that the state was undone.

Then it was that invention and courage were found in Calonne. After having exhausted every means of giving new life to expiring credit, he saw that his only hope lay in some brilliant stroke, which might make the edicts appear like a restoration of public affairs; and, in order to display them invested with a commanding authority, he asked of the king an assembly of notables, in which

he might lay open the situation of the finances, and might consult with them upon the means of filling up the deficiency which, according to his own account, he had found on coming into office, and which the war in both the Indies had naturally augmented.

This assembly was opened at Versailles on the 27th of February 1787. The proposal which Calonne presented was vast and daring; perhaps it deserved more favour than it obtained; for it brought forward that equal distribution of taxes, which would both increase their amount, and, at the same time, alleviate their burden. But the notables were among the number of those who would be affected by the new impositions; and to this, most unhappily for themselves and for the state, they had never been able to consent. Of the projects of Calonne some were judged confused and subtle, others full of difficulties, which rendered them impracticable; others, in short, bad, even though they could have

been executed. Such was the result of the observations of the notables upon the part of his proposal which underwent their examination, for it was not even discussed to the end.

His fundamental principle was a territorial impost, the advantage of which would have consisted in following the progressive rise in the value of land. If, however, the collection had been found too difficult, he would have changed its mode, provided it had been equally derived from all kinds of property. But they would not even enter into a composition with him; and with regard both to matter and form, the notables determined that this was inadmissible, and they at the same time expressly refused to deliberate upon any species of tax, unless detailed statements were laid before them of the receipt and expenditure, by which they might see how the *deficit* had been incurred; that if, after an examination of the accounts, a new supply was indispensable, they would consent to have the

imposition equally laid upon every sort of property.

The reply of the king was such as had been foreseen. They were forbid to insist upon this examination; but the explanation which Calonne refused had been provoked by himself, when he entered into a contest with Necker respecting the origin of the deficit. The following is the manner in which he had got into this dangerous defile.

In 1787, at the opening of the assembly, the *deficit*, by Calonne's own acknowledgment, was a hundred and fifteen millions;* and as it was desirable for him to believe, that a considerable part of this *deficit* existed before his time, he actually did believe and assert it in the assembly of the notables.

Necker, on being informed that in this assembly Calonne meant to accuse, as incorrect, all the accounts given in before his administration, wrote to him that having bestowed the most scrupulous atten-

* £4,750,000.

tion on the account which he had given in 1781, he considered it as perfectly correct; and, continued he, 'as I have vouchers for all the articles which admitted of such proof, I luckily find myself able to give full evidence of the truth. Surely then, sir, I have a right to demand, either that you will not impair, in any degree, the confidence due to the correctness of this account, or that you will communicate to me an explanation of your doubts.'

Calonne, with a very slight promise not to attack this account, shunned the explanation. Necker insisted, and in reply to the most urgent letter, he received a note politely ironical, with a copy of the discourse which Calonne had just pronounced in the assembly of notables, and in which he had asserted, that in 1781 there was a considerable deficit in the ordinary revenues. Necker was at the same time informed, that in the great committee of the notables, which was held at the house of *Monsieur*, Calonne had expressly said that this sum

was considerably above fifty-six millions.* Necker then complained to the king that the comptroller-general of finance had accused, without consenting to hear him. 'Sire,' said he in his letter, 'I should of all men in the world be the most deserving of contempt, if there were the least foundation for such a charge; I must repel it at the risk of my repose and my happiness, and I come humbly to intreat that your majesty will have the goodness to allow me to appear before my public accuser, either in the assembly of notables, or in the great committee of that assembly, always, however, in your majesty's presence.' No answer was given to this letter: but Necker did not think himself obliged to understand this silence of the king, as Calonne wished it to be understood. 'The king,' said he, in the memorial which he published, 'has not thought fit to grant my demand; but, satisfied with the extent of his kindness and justice, I submit with confidence to

* £2,300,000 sterling.

the obligation which is imposed upon me by honour and truth.'

In this memorial he admitted, that in 1776 Cluny had left in the finances a void of twenty-four millions;* he allowed also, that from the death of Cluny in October 1776 to the month of May 1781, the era at which he himself had retired from the finances, the increase of expenditure had amounted to nearly forty-five millions; but he at the same time shewed how he had filled up this void, both by economy and by improvements in the national revenue. The notables pretended that Calonne was obliged to discuss and refute these calculations; and it must be owned that he himself had too hastily undertaken it.

Necker had rendered his calculations as clear as possible, and they derived great additional weight from his acknowledged veracity. The book which he had just published upon the finances had strengthened his personal reputation; his manners, his talents, his information, had secured to him a degree of public

* £1,000,000.

esteem, which Calonne should never, without strong and powerful means, have attempted to shake.

Necker was banished for having dared to defend himself. This was another injurious part of Calonne's conduct; he ought either to have heard before attacking him, or given him full permission to repel the attack. He imputed to him his ill success in the assembly of the notables; but he should have known that in this assembly a much more real enemy was seeking his ruin.

The king felt repugnance to separate from Calonne: he liked his manner of doing business, he was convinced of the goodness of his schemes; but foreseeing that they would be rejected by the parliament, as they had been by the notables, he did violence to himself, and dismissed him. He knew that Miromenil, the keeper of the seals, was Calonne's enemy, and had thwarted his operations to the utmost of his power; he dismissed him at the same time, as if sacrificing

the one to the other—Calonne the 8th April, Miromenil the 9th. Fourqueux was called to the ministry of finance; the seals were given to the president de Lamoignon.

It was not possible that Fourqueux should continue long in this situation; but he had been pointed out to the king by persons who wished to have time for destroying his prejudices against a man whom they wished to give him as his confidential minister, and from whom they expected the salvation of the state.

The situation of the king's mind at this moment is expressed to the life in details, which I shall now transcribe.

'When the king intrusted me with his letter to M. de Fourqueux,' says the Count de Montmorin, in notes which he put into my hands, 'I thought it my duty to represent to him that the powers of this worthy magistrate appeared to me unequal to the burden of the finances. The king seemed sensible that my uneasiness was well founded. But whom

then can we take? said he. I replied, that it was impossible not to be astonished at this question, while there existed a man who united in himself all the wishes of the public; that at all times it was necessary not to thwart public opinion in the choice of a minister of finance; but that in the critical circumstances in which he now was, it was not enough to forbear thwarting, it was indispensably necessary to follow it. I added, that so long as M. Necker existed, it was impossible for him to have another minister of finance, because the public could never, without irritation and chagrin, see this place filled by another. The king admitted the talents of M. Necker, but he objected to the faults of his character; and I easily recognized the unfavourable impressions which he had originally received from Maurepas, and which Vergennes, Calonne, Miromenil, and Breteuil, had engraved more deeply. I did not know M. Necker personally; I could oppose only doubts to what the king told me of

his character, of his haughtiness and spirit of dominion. It is not unlikely that if I had known him I should have accomplished his recal. I ought, perhaps, to have insisted farther, even though I did not know him. From how many evils should I have saved France, and how many afflictions should I have saved the king!' (What would M. Montmorin have said had he foreseen, that in consequence of missing this favourable moment for changing the course of our fatal destinies, he himself would be massacred by an infuriate people, and that three months after his death the king would perish on a scaffold?) 'I was obliged,' continued he, 'to give to M. Fourqueux the letter addressed to him, and even to overcome his resistance; my orders were positive. Nevertheless it is certain that the place had been offered to M. de la Millière: the queen had sent for him; the king had gone to her apartment at the hour appointed, and both urged him very much to accept; but he [illegible] good sense

enough not to yield to their urgency. M. de Fourqueux made difficulty enough at first; but at length he agreed. Scarce was he in office, when the modest opinion which he entertained of himself was but too fully confirmed.

'Meanwhile,' continues M. de Montmorin, 'affairs were in a state of complete stagnation; public credit was every day more completely destroyed; the factitious and ruinous resources which M. de Calonne had employed for the supply of the treasury suddenly failed, and produced a daily and considerable fall in the funds; the royal treasury was empty: a stoppage of all payments seemed approaching, nor could any resource be thought of except a loan, which it was impossible to attempt at a period of such desperate poverty. Ill-humour prevailed more and more in the assembly of notables; their disposition became unfriendly, and low murmurs began to be heard of the *States General*. In these circumstances it was necessary to have a

man who could command public opinion. M. de Lamoignon and myself communicated our ideas to each other, and we agreed that the only man on whom any hope could be founded, was Necker. But I mentioned to him the obstacles which I had discovered arising from the disposition of the king, and warned him that they would become still more unsurmountable from the presence of the Baron de Breteuil. We had a conference with the latter, and attempted, but in vain, to convert him. At last, after a long sitting, we determined upon going up to the king; and when we had all three entered upon the subject of the change which was necessary in the ministry of finance, I spoke forcibly upon the necessity of having recourse to the man who was called for by the wishes of the public. The king replied (with a look indeed of the deepest affliction), 'Well, we have nothing for it but to recall him.' But the Baron de Breteuil then rose, and, with the greatest warmth, op-

posed this half-extorted resolution; he represented the inconsistency there would be in recalling and placing at the head of administration, a man who had scarcely reached the place appointed for his exile: how great would be the weakness of such a conduct; what power would it put in the hands of him, who, being raised to his office by public opinion, would think himself indebted to it alone. He enlarged forcibly and at great length on the abuse which M. Necker would not fail to make of such circumstances. He painted his character in the colours most likely to make an impression on a king naturally jealous of his authority, but who had a confused idea of an attempt being made to wrest it from him, and wished to retain what he still thought himself in full possession of. There was something very specious in the arguments urged by the Baron de Breteuil; but though they had been less so, they would still have produced the effect upon the king, who had yielded to my opinion with the ut-

most reluctance, and, perhaps, only because he thought us all three of one mind. The archbishop of Toulouse was then proposed, and accepted without opposition. The king said to us, however, that he was supposed to have a restless, and ambitious character, and that we might, perhaps, repent of having suggested this choice to him. But, he added, that he had reason to think that the faults of this prelate had been exaggerated; that, for some time past, the prejudices which he had entertained against him had been weakened, and that he had been satisfied with several memorials which he had transmitted to him on the subject of administration.'

I have omitted none of these particulars, both because they will lay open the king's character, a little too easy perhaps, but natural and good; and because they will shew how the grand link was forged in the chain of our misfortunes.

NOTES

TO THE THIRD VOLUME.

NOTE 1, p. 266.

THIS melancholy event happened on the 27th April 1785. The following account of it is given in the Leyden Gazette.

'We have, within these few days, experienced the greatest calamities by the overflowing of the Oder, which burst its banks in several places, and carried away houses, bridges, and every thing that opposed its course. Numbers of people have lost their lives in this rapid inundation; but, of all the accidents arising from it, none is so generally lamented as the death of the good Prince Leopold, of Brunswick. While this amiable prince was, standing at the side of the river, a woman threw herself at his feet, beseeching him to give orders for some persons to go to the rescue of her children,

whom, bewildered by the sudden danger, she had left behind her in the house: some soldiers, who were also in the same place, were crying out for help. The duke endeavoured to procure a flat-bottomed boat, but no one could be found to venture across the river, even though the duke offered large sums of money, and promised to share the danger. At last, moved by the cries of the unfortunate inhabitants of the suburb, and led by the sensibility of his own benevolent heart, he took the resolution of going to their assistance himself: those who were about him endeavoured to dissuade him from this hazardous enterprise; but, touched to the soul by the distress of the miserable people, he replied in the following words, which so nobly picture his character—'What am I more than either you or they? I am a man like yourselves, and nothing ought to be attended to here but the voice of humanity.' Unshaken, therefore, in his resolution, he immediately embarked, with three watermen, in a small boat, and crossed the river: the boat had almost reached the opposite bank, when it struck against a tree, and in an instant they all together with the boat, disappeared. A few minutes after, the duke rose again, and swam

ported himself a short time by taking hold of a tree; but the violence of the current soon bore him down; and he never appeared more. The boatmen, more fortunate, were every one saved; and the duke alone became the victim of his own humanity. The whole city is in affliction for the loss of this truly amiable prince, whose humility, gentleness of manners, and compassionate disposition, endeared him to all ranks. He lived indeed, as he died, in the highest exercise of humanity. Had not the current been so rapid, he would no doubt have been saved, as he was a remarkably good swimmer.

NOTE 2, p. 323.

The council of state in France was not, in the same degree as our privy council, a mere honorary body; but was employed in deliberating upon the affairs belonging to all the different branches of administration. It was divided into five parts; one for foreign affairs, another for domestic regulation, a third for the finances, a fourth for the marine, and the fifth and last for private affairs, or those which respected the rights of individuals. All these sometimes deliberated toge-

ther, and formed then what was properly called the Royal Council, or Council of State. That for foreign affairs was the most honourable; and it seems to be the branch to which the name of cabinet is here given. Besides one or two of the ministers, it consisted of a few of the most distinguished nobility, whom the king, when he wished to pay peculiar honour to them, sent and desired to attend at a particular meeting; ever after which they were considered as cabinet ministers; a distinction which, like that of privy counsellor with us, seems often to have been, in a great measure, honorary.

NOTE 3, p. 329.

The French parliaments were chiefly established for the administration of justice throughout the kingdom. They had a higher privilege, however, which was that of registering the royal edicts. Till this ceremony was performed, these edicts were not considered as laws. The parliament thus possessed a sort of negative in legislative arrangements. When, however, it obstinately refused to register any particular edict, which the court was determined to enforce,

the king came in person to the assembly, and there, by his sovereign authority, ordered its registration. The meetings where this took place were called *Beds of justice*. It was considered, however, as a high stretch of power, and never failed to occasion discontent

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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